

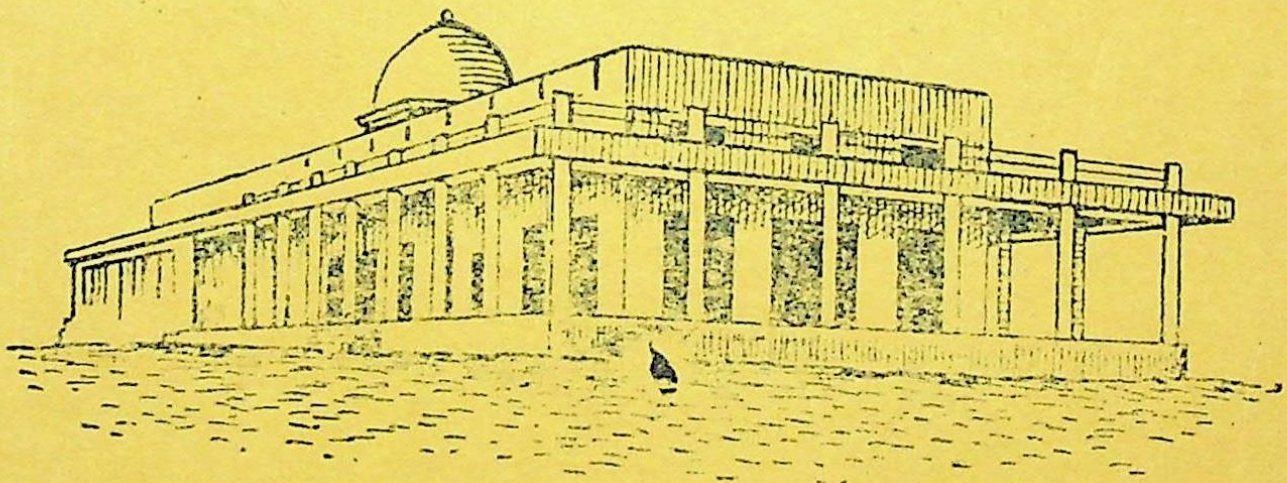
V.C. SAKTHI WIT P.P.
SHARAKKA - 1/82

Pathway to God

(A Quarterly Journal of Spiritual Life)



आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्य : ।



SRI GURUDEVA MANDIR

**ACADEMY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY AND
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Pathway to God

(*A quarterly Journal of Spiritual Life*)

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PATHWAY TO GOD

(*A Quarterly Journal of Spiritual Life*)

“ One God, One World, One Humanity ”

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P R A Y E R

PRAYER TO SUPREME BEING

प्रातर्नमामि तमसः परमर्कवर्णं

पूर्णं सनातनपदं पुरुषोत्तमाख्यम् ।

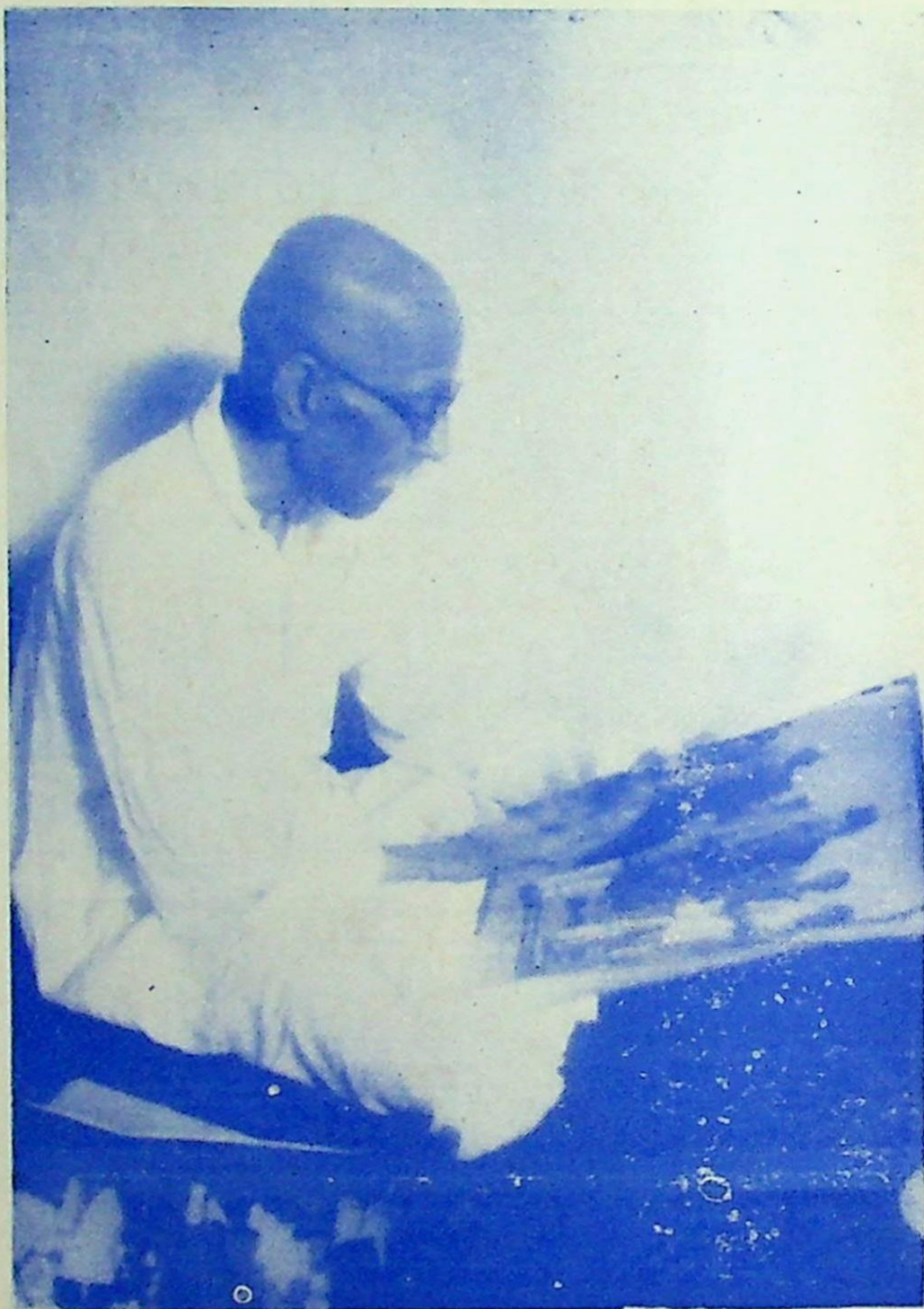
यस्मिन्निदं जगदशेषमशेषमूर्तौ

इज्ज्वां भुजंगम इव प्रतिभासमानम् ॥

At dawn I salute the sun-like effulgent Being who is beyond all darkness, who is called the Supreme, the Infinite and the Eternal, in whom appears the world of manifold forms like the snake superimposed on the rope.

Pratah-Smarana Stotra

**Shri Gurudeva
Dr. R. D. Ranade**



**Born : Jamkhandi
3-7-1886**

**Samadhi : Nimbai
8-6-1957**

EDITORIAL

RAMA - DASA

Samartha Rama-dasa was a saint, philosopher, poet and mystic all rolled into one. His political awareness was of no mean order. He had attained highest spiritual experience through vigorous practices and at the same time he was a great social worker. His views on various topics which are found in his works like Dasabodha are given here in brief :-

Jnana - The knowledge relating to geology, zoology, botany, logic, astrology etc. should not be called Jnana. The realisation of the Self alone should be called Jnana. One should not merely repeat the Mahavakyas of the Upanisads; but one should reflect upon them. That is called Jnana. Or if God stays in the heart constantly with His grace, that should be called Jnana.

God - Not images but the inner Self is God. Images may be broken or stolen, but such can never be the case with real God. By selling ink one cannot attain the wealth of a kingdom; similarly by making or seeing images one cannot attain God. If the inner God is not known, going on a pilgrimage to holy places would mean only seeing water and stones. God is always by the side of the devotee to protect him. He only tests his courage in difficult situations. God is omnipresent like the sky. He is not involved in the vicissitudes of the world and undergoes no change at all.

Sadguru - The real God is attained through a Sadguru only. A Sadguru urges his pupil to lead a pious life, to worship God and to undertake suitable Sadhana. He leads the pupil on the path of spiritual progress. He blesses him with correct perspective and courage. Hence no object can

stand comparison to a Sadguru. One may try to compare him to the Sun. But after the sun-set darkness appears again, whereas once the darkness of ignorance is removed by the Sadguru, it never returns. One may wish to compare him to the ocean. But the ocean is salty whereas the Sadguru is always sweet. One may wish to compare him to mount Meru. But the mountain is hard whereas the Sadguru is very soft. Hence the best description of a Sadguru is that he is one who can never be described.

Devotee :- A devotee is he who forgets the woes of life and centres his mind in God. He has no desire in his mind except for the attainment of God. As he firmly believes that God will always help him, he is never afraid of dangers and difficulties. A devotee engages himself in benevolent activities to please God. He remembers God incessantly whether in prosperity or adversity. He discards all pleasures for the sake of attaining God. He surrenders himself and his activities completely to God. When he sits in meditation, he does not brook the interference of any thought or idea between himself and the God. God fulfils the desire that occasionally arises in the mind of the devotee. Unless a devotee detaches himself from the clutches of mundane life, and seeks God earnestly, he can not have realisation. He must remember God inwardly always and should not tell his spiritual experiences to others. A devotee should not seek any thing from other persons and should not depend upon others for the completion of his task.

Nama-smarana—Constant awareness of God is essential for a Sadhaka. Repeating the Name of God is the chief means to maintain that awareness. This should be done regularly in the morning, afternoon, evening and also at night. Whether one be in a state of happiness or of suffering, one should not forget to repeat the divine Name. All the sins are washed away and all the calamities are averted easily by repeating God's Name. Repeating the divine Name is not difficult and costs nothing. Moreover there is no restriction regarding time or place, caste or creed. Any person can remember God at any hour and at any spot.

(v)

Devotion - Every good activity becomes successful when it is supported by devotion. Devotion should be always desireless. Due to the study of scriptures devotion and detachment arise in mind, mind becomes steady and purified, all doubts are resolved, and the hunger for attaining God arises. Devotion enables a devotee to realise what is beyond mind and intellect. When he realises this, he gets equanimity of mind and allows his body to follow the due course of Prarabdha.

Super-mental State :- Due to the study of holy scriptures and contemplation on them, the fluctuations of mind are reduced. A clear understanding relating to Brahman removes from the mind other thoughts, just as the light of the Sun removes darkness. Continuous meditation on the Self takes away all duality from the mind and brings about the realisation of Advaita. When the mind is concentrated in deep meditation, the awareness of the body is no longer there. There is the pure consciousness of the Self alone and nothing else. The mind becomes one with the Self and attains complete rest. The mind forgets itself or rather gets dissolved in the experience of the Self. When camphor is burning, the flame is there; but when the camphor is burnt out, the flame gets extinguished. Similarly the mind gets extinguished when the ideas are no longer there. This state can not be described, as it is beyond words.

- B. R. MODAK

The Social And Religious Uplift Of Maharashtra And Ramadas's Contribution To It

- Dr. R. V. CHITNIS

M.A., Ph.D.

The Historical Background :

To trace the important and relevant portions of the history of India as a whole and therewith of Maharashtra especially, right from the arrival of the first Muslim in India to the reign of Aurangzeb, is quite necessary to correctly evaluate Ramdas's efforts towards the uplift of India, of the Hindu Society, religion and towards reestablishment of the Hindu religion—Swadharm as Ramdas names it.

The Chinese Traveller Hu-en-t-sang has praised India and especially Maharashtra for the well administration and the peaceful, law-abiding citizens and inhabitants. Till then everything was well and good. But this was changed when the first muslim, Mohamed Kasim stepped in India in Shaka 634. He captured the Sind Province in 714 A. D. and during this he massacred thousands of innocent villagers, took away thousands of women and sold them as slaves and sent them to foreign countries. He demolished many beautiful temples, broke into pieces the idols in them. The defeat of the Brahmin ruler of Sind was the beginning of muslim rule in India.

Thereafter, with the invasion by Mohamed Gizani, the roots of muslim intruders became firm and began to spread. Northern India was intruded and oppressed severely by most brutal looters. This work continued for more than five centuries. At the end of the thirteenth century the mohamedans began to pour down in Deccan and Gujrat. Allauddin took possession of the wealthy Kingdom of Anahilwed. He crossed the river Narmada and suddenly fought agains

(2)

Devgiri. With this, the way was opened for the merciless muslims to Warangal. In 1311 A. D. the dynasties of Yadav and Hoysal were defeated. The whole of the Deccan had passed into the hands of Sultans. Five muslim Kingdoms called Bahamani States had tried to conquer the well established Vijaynagar Hindu Empire, which was the fruit of Shri. Viddyrannya's efforts. The empire was strong and powerful for about a century and a half. All attempts of the Bahamani Rulers were fruitless until they were not united. But at last, they all united together and crushed the empire in Shaka 1506, just about twenty four years before the birth of Shri. Ramdas.

Portugese were equally cruel. Since 1498 A. D. on their arrival in India, they looted people many times, raped thousands of women, converted Hindus to Christianity under compulsion. There was no justice in Goa for Hindus. The jails were packed with Hindu prisoners who had to work rigorously for fourteen to sixteen hours a day, and were not getting sufficient and good food in return.

Thus, we can see that throughout all these centuries the Hindu religion was in danger. Hindus were tortured. A few instances of oppression, torture and cruelty by Muslim and Portuguese rulers are being given below:-

1) Mohamed Kasim massacred thousands of men, compelled many Hindus to accept the Muslim Religion, made many noblewomen his maid servants, sent many women to Iran, closed many women in his harem.

“ किती गुजिणी ब्राम्हणी भ्रष्टविल्या । किती शांमुखी जाहजी फोकविल्या ॥ ” (Ramdas in अस्मानी – सुलतानी.)

He destroyed many Hindu temples and built mosques in their places, looted wealth from such temples.

2) About 250 years after, Sabaktgin Invaded the rulers up to Sind, and during the invasion massacred many innocent people and looted their wealth.

3) Between 1001 A. D. and 1027 A. D., Mohamed invaded this country seventeen times. In one invasion he looted unmeasurable wealth of Nagarkot temple; in another, he captured innumerable men and women of Thaneshwar City; in third he looted Mathura City, destroyed all temples there, broke into pieces the idols of deities, burnt many houses and enslaved many men and women. Of all these seventeen invasions, the most remarkable and cruel was that of Somnath in Gujrat. He broke down the idol there, which was full of most precious jewels, diamonds, pearls, gold and silver coins etc. His cruelty in all these invasions was beyond expression.

4) Taimur was the beginner of the vices in Moghals. Fanaticism, cruelty, greed of wealth, lust, debauchery and such other inhuman vices, moghals inherited from Taimur. He declared that his intention, apart from all others, was to compulsorily convert Hindus to mohamedan religion. (Moghal Empire : S. R. Sharma,)

5) Shah Fath-i-Kangru writes about Jahangir that he destroyed Hindu temples and looted their wealth. (Elliot and Dowson. Vol. VI)

6) Murshid Kuli, an Officer, used to aduct women from the villages which were in arrears of Govt. cess. He pressed them into his harem. He also used to garb like a Hindu woman and mix in the gathering of ladies at the time of Gowardhan Fare, near Mathura. He kept his eye upon some beautiful women there and outraged them.

7) To destroy Hindu temples and idols and to use them for latrins, lavetaries, or seats was the common habit of all the Muslim rulers.

8) Taimur-I-lang attacked Delhi in 1398 A. D. In this attack he arrested a large number of men and women. He was taking them with him as captives; but when he felt it very difficult to travel with them, he killed not less than one

(4)

lakh of them in cold blood. In Delhi itself he killed thousands of people. All roads of Delhi were full of dead bodies; one could not make way through them.

9) Italian traveller Manucci was in service of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb for many years. He also travelled all over India. This was the time of Shivaji and Ramdas. He has reported the incidents of cruelty of Moghal Kings as seen by him personally.

When an Officer was successful in an invasion he used to send the heads of the dead bodies to Agra. Badshah used to keep those in squares of the city, so that the public should see them. After 24 hours these heads were hanged upon the trees on both sides of the streets and kept in the holes of the walls of forts and castles. Manucci has seen ten thousand of such heads.

10) The French Traveller, Tavernier also mentions similar instances. He writes, "Aurangzeb cut off heads of many princelings who could not pay the taxes in time. He also killed many citizens without any serious offence. Manucci was tired to quote such instances.

11) The Portugese came in India in 1498 A.D. They ruled over Goa, Div and Daman for about four hundred years. All through their rule they were cruel towards the countrymen, citizens & villagers. They converted many Hindus to Christianity by threat and coercion.

In short, not a single person was there in India who had the backbone to protect people against coercion and oppression; who could stand firm on his religious footing, who would accept the challenge of muslim and portugese rulers and face death in defending his family, protecting his daughters, wife and sisters from being taken away or raped & who could fight for defending temples from being destroyed. The people had lost faith in God and religion. They thought their God was unable to protect them; they felt unsecured. They were all divided. They failed to realise the strength of

unity. They had wrong impressions about the nature of God and religion. They had become almost slaves. Such was the condition of people nearly all over India.

Ramdas's Observations :-

Unlike other Saints of Maharashtra and all over India Ramdas prepared himself for a mission to uplift the people in all the ways of life. He was thinking about the world since his childhood, say—the eighth year of his age. Though this seems unreal, it is a fact in his life. Many such things in his life, one would feel strange and unreal. He had replied his mother, when she had asked him what he was doing in the dark corner of the house, he replied that he was anxious about the world(चिंता करितो विश्वार्चा). His mind must have been a unique one to feel tormented by hearing the miseries of the world. He accepted the life of an ascetic in order to secure a good spiritual power, to realise the Ultimate Reality. He ran away from the marriage altar and travelled to Takali near Nasik. There he observed penance for twelve years. One thing must be taken into consideration that he brought the dead body of Giridharpant Ashtaputre to life only after a couple of years of his penance. He had consequently gained reputation as an achieved Sadhu. Pilgrims from Kashi to Rameshwar and from Dwarka to Puri used to see him. Ramdas got every information of the cruelty and oppression by muslims and Portugese rulers from such pilgrims.

Shahaji Raje also visited Nasik several times as it was an important place in his Jahagir. He heard the reputation of Ramdas, a very young man, who has attained the height of the spiritual life. Even if he was in service of a muslim state he had a desire to re-establish Hindu religion and Swarajya. He had discussed this with Ramdas. Ramdas also wanted to take a round of the whole country to witness with his naked eyes, the ruin of temples, idols, and holy places. But he could not leave his place until his penance was completed. He, therefore, immediately after finishing of the penance, started for pilgrimage with a two-fold intention

of visiting the holy places, temples, bathe in the holy rivers and to observe the condition of the whole country. He finished his travels after 12 years from the start. He has written about this in Dasabodh, Par-Chakra Nirupan, Asmani-Sultani and in his few other writings. This corroborates the contentions of the historians and travellers.

He has said in one of his writings, "Every thing that matters is looted, only the land remains. This has brought untold hardships on almost all. There is no food to eat nor clothing to cover the body. There is no material to build houses. What will the people do? So many have fallen in wrong courses; so many have been cast out of castes and classes. Children are all weeping and dying. Nothing is satisfactory; every one is confused. People are plunged in endless anxiety. Some one asks where to go? What is the use of going to other places or countries where also there is no provision of food? One has to come to his wit's end. Begging does not bring any thing when all are beggars. Whom to blame? The whole population has been afflicted. It is difficult to search out a happy home. No one, indeed, recognizes and befriends the other in hard times." (Translation by S. S. Apte Ramdas; Life and Mission.)

He says, "While I wander, I see the people all in gloom everywhere. I am shocked in my mind about their plight. But this is the tale every where I am required to go to places where I should never have gone; I am forced to eat what should not be eaten; occasions arise when one has to speak what should always be avoided; but what is to be done? One has to endure what cannot be cured. One should not, in false pride, become afflicted or mournful. One must not get disgusted at all but bear what comes to one's lot with the patience to wait and watch" (Translation by S. S. Apte.)

"The land is lost to the enemies; when the crops ripen, hordes of soldiers appear and take them away. The result is to face the hard times. Families are separated and disintegrated. There is no one to whom to look to for support or strength. There is no trade, nor any purchaser, everything is

in chaos. Hard times have come and the anxiety is how to save the honour. Might is the only authority and no one knows what is in the offing. All merit and goodness seem to have disappeared. The powerful have become shameless and they kidnap young girls. Justice has totally disappeared and it is a reign of terror and force."

Ramdas had information of past centuries and hence he called it as (बहुता दिसांचे माजले वंड) cruelty of many days. He travelled in all parts of India and observed the wretched condition of the people in all respects. He saw the ruins of temples, houses, even of farms, as well as the distressing condition of the people, who had lost faith in religion and God, virtues, morals, personal character, purity of body and mind. They had become slaves of the situation. He was much aggrieved when he saw the temple of Shri. Ram at Ayodhya demolished and mosque erected in its place. This he saw in the second round of his travel. In Dasbodh he has described the wretched condition of a family. (Dasak. 3.) In this picturesque description he has given an example only of what was going on everywhere in India. In Dashak 14. Samas 7 he has complained that Brahmins have deviated from the moral path, have come down from their position of Guru (master) to a lower level of a pupil of pupils. Many go to Daval-malik, a muslim saint at the time of Ramdas, to be his pupils. Many worship peers instead of Hindu Gods; many get converted as turks with their own accord....our empire is taken away from us. The position of a Guru has also been taken away from us and has been given to uneducated and unfit persons, we are neither rulers nor masters...Brahmins at present have only acted in such a way that they cannot get good food (आतांचे ब्राम्हणीं काय केलें । अन्न मिळेतो ऐसे जाले ॥) Are you not "experiencing this at present. ?"(तुमच्या प्रचीतीस आले किंवा नाही ?)

In this great agony he prayed his Lord Ram in the following words, " O Lord ! Now I cannot endure all this there is not a single spot where I can work with satisfaction or rest a-while in peace. Odd times have indeed over-

whelmed us; I have, therefore, no go but to concentrate all my attention upon YOU ! There is no ease in my mind or body; day and night the anxiety about the people around is crushing my mind. Is there any hope of having the time when all the people will become happy? Is there any chance for all the people to become blessed and joyful again? O Lord ! How long are you going to test our endurance? It is impossible to wait for any more time or to bear with honour all this ! The bodies and minds of all the people have become fragile and tortured to last no longer."

Invaluable Task of Ramdas :-

Ramdas had to work against such odds. He had to face boldly the cruel rulers, to awaken the young and old, men and women, to prepare to fight against these odds.

He had to build up again the demolished temples and to build up new ones too, to create confidence in the minds of the people. He wanted that all the Hindus should get united, stand firm on their feet and fight for their upliftment. He wanted to revive the lost faith in God, that their faith should never be blind but should be with full of proper knowledge. Maharashtra Dharma should be reestablished, enlivened out of which bold warriors should spring up and faithful and trustworthy followers of these warriors should be in the field to wage war against the monstrous rulers. Brahmins should be after real knoweldge and be Gurus of all. Kshatriyas should be real warriors, and should not engage themselves in tormenting Brahmins only because they fetch violent strength. Such a newly created strength in them should be helpful to establish benevolent administration and peace in the country, and to crush the most voluptuous and cruel kings. He wanted to create a new powerful king out of such moral warriors, who should have virtues and gifts from God. Ramdas prayed, therefore, his family deity Tulaja Bhawani to create and bring forth such a new king. (तुझा तू वाढवी राजा । शोच आम्हाचि देखता ।). He has requested in his prayer that the Goddess Tulaja Bhavani

should not take much time creating such a king. Ramdas wanted to see such a king in his life time.

The Nature of Efforts of Ramdas : -

When Ramdas fully recognised and grasped the whole situation in the country, he began his work of upliftment. Really speaking he had started this work at his age of sixteen while observing austerities at Takali. After bringing the dead Giridharpant to life again he had begged the couple their first son to act as his disciple. He had plan before him of the upliftment of the country.

1) First of all he banished the fear of death from the minds of the people. Every body in this world must die any day or other. What is the use of being afraid of it then ? Is it not better to die bravely than to die in a feeble condition of oldage? Is it not good to die bravely for the sake of God ? (सर्व अर्पावे शेंवटी। प्राण तोहो वेंचावा।). In order to convince this Ramdas

has described in his Dasdodh the wretched condition of the people. Is it not better to die than to live in a wretched condition? Ramdas has specially devoted one samas to show the inevitability of Death. Ramdas advised people to die for noble cause and be famous by that. (मरावे परी कीर्ति रूपें उरावें)

2) He then turned to advise people some philosophy. The people were not getting what they desired and consequently they were sorry. Ramdas showed them that nobody in this world was happy. The rich and the poor; the old and the young, men and women, Brahmins and others, masters and servants, Gurus and Chelas, nobody was happy. Why then be sorry for not getting the desired happiness ? Accept the situation as it is and be not nervous on this account. On the contrary try for better luck by striving hard, by using your body and mind, both strong. Try to be happy and make others happy, Are you the human beings only ? Are you not God yourself ? You can do and undo things if you wish so strongly. Are you not ashamed of your downfall ? Come and unite then. I will lead you and show you the proper path to be happy and gay.

3) Ramdas created various Maths, monestaries in all parts of India, He had started this work since long ago, when he was observing penance at Takali. He created about 1100 maths in India. When Shivaji escaped from Agra and was very much anxious for the safety of his son Sambhaji, then a boy; he immediately entrusted him to a disciple of Ramdas at Mathura. The mogal soldiers found Sambhaji in his home. But the mahant convinced the soldiers that he (Sambhaji) was his son and not Sambhaji, by taking food in one and the same plate. From this one instance alone, we can judge the nature of Ramdas's work.

4) Ramdas taught the people to be strong in bodily strength. He built temples of Shri Hanuman in every village of Maharashtra and in all parts of India, he visited. Shri Hanuman was the symbol of a warrior who crushed under his feet the monsters-the cruel moghal kings. Hanuman meant every person in India who strongly wished to be free from the clutches of foreign rule. He used to advise the people to gather in such temples and endeavour for strength. Ramdas thus made the people militant.

5) Ramdas gave importance to effort and asked the people to give up the notion of fate (दैव). He advised that the man should never leave efforts for the achievement of his goal.

6) The common man at the time of Ramdas was always anxious for food. He could not get any service or work for his maintenance. Such a person was advised by Ramdas to live on alms. Why should a man depend upon others? Whatever we get, is the gift from God. One should help himself. Be not anxious about food. It will come to you of its own accord. You only have to try for it very seriously. Rama will not forsake you, if you pray to Him with full heart.

7) Ramdas never stayed at one place for a long time. He always moved in villages, towns, fields, hills and mountains. He used to stay in villages, and ponder upon the life in villages. He was thus in the know of all the political, religious and social situations. He was always thinking of the ways to

create powerful nation with healthy and moral people and the bold Hindu religion-Swadharma.

8) Ramdas boldly built the temple of Shri. Rama at Chaphal at the beginning of his mission. This was a shock to the Muslim authorities and gave courage to the people. They became confident about Ramdas and his teachings.

9) Ramdas met Shivaji and discussed with him the need of Swarajya and Swadharma. He informed him about his own efforts towards that. The missionary work of Ramdas was the foundation of Shivaji's future gigantic task. Ramdas was very alert about the moghal rulers. He had cautioned Shivaji about Afazulkhan. He advised Shivaji to be very cautious about him. In Dasbodh, this caution has been mentioned in one Samasa. Ramdas refused to accept the kingdom offered by Shivaji. He wanted Shivaji to rule the kingdom with firm faith in God. He was not present at the time of throning ceremony of Shivaji at Raigad. He was not interested in that or in any kind of enjoyment. Throughout his life, he strived for Swadharma and Swarajya.

10) By the combined efforts of Ramdas and Shivaji, Maharashtra became free and happy. Freedom was achieved. Rulers like cruel Aurangzeb were dead and gone. There was plenty of water to bathe freely and to observe religious rites. There remained no fear of attack from mohamedans. Ramdas was quite happy with this. He has expressed his contentment in one of his compositions.

Such was the great effort of Ramdas for the social and religious uplift of Maharashtra. Nobody tried so hard as Ramdas. Our country will be benefitted if it follows the path shown by Ramdas.



Impact of Mystical Philosophy on The Social and Political life of Maharashtra.

Prof :- S. V. ATRE.
(Sangamner)

1. Meaning and Role of Mysticism.

Mysticism is an off-shoot of philosophical thinking, that as a rule avoids dry and vain discussions leading to no practical results, or betterment of life of man as a man. A mystic prefers at times silence rather than hot and lengthy discussions. The view as such emphasises the practical and moral aspect of life. We can agree, remarks Kant, both for and against, as regards principles, we call ultimate. He calls such principles as antinomies. God is and is not; Reality is knowable and unknowable; World is eternal and it has a beginning and an end, are the examples of such antinomies. Gautam, the Buddha avoided to answer like problems in either way and observed silence. He would say, 'Look my disciples' I will give you a parable. Suppose a man is hit with arrow; what will you choose to do? Will you first nurse him or engage vain discussion with him? You will surely prefer nursing him quickly. Here we observe that Buddha was surely a mystic who skillfully prompted his disciples to a right course of social action. When suitable opportunity occurred, the mystics never hesitated in explaining things in a right vein. The way they adopted was to be sure and convincing. The attitude was to be rational throughout. Mysticism and Dogmatism could not go together in any way.

Mysticism therefore proved a powerful means to social change and sublimation of an individual in society. It does away with all sorts of mis-conceptions, purifies thought and action and takes an individual towards a noble path of life. For a mystic the means justify the ends, and not vice versa. The approach is more concerning the individual rather than collective; although collective, one is not neglected. History

tells us that mystics have rendered valuable service to society and to a country as well. Shri Dnaneshwar, Ramdas, Tukarama, Shri Ramkrishna were some such eminent mystics who have done invaluable service to this land.

2. Competency towards infusion and culture.

A mystic is a kind of superior power in himself. He or she is rather a cluster of human virtues that form a magnetic personality. People of their own accord are attracted (1) to it for the fulfilment of their aspirations-secular or spiritual. Mystics on their part, heartily welcome the aspirants and help them to overcome their debilities. They make them fit enough to face squarely the problems, be these personal, social or political. Their utter friendship and compassion is competent enough to create power and confidence in the aspirants. Mystics have nothing to gain thereby; but they undertake this mission from humanitarian point of view. The attitude is so wide that nothing can set a limit to it. Caste, creed or religion is no bar for a mystic. No political power can stop him in his way.

A situation full of chaos and confusion as regards the nature and fulfilment of duties favour a mystic to come fourth and save a society or world at large (2) where reason is of no avail and the scriptures do not agree upon an issue; where seers are not accepted as a valid source of guidance, then mystics (Mahajanas) alone come forward and show the way out (3) of malady. A mystic is competent because of his purity of heart and sweet words that could easily appeal, convince and encourage an aspirant towards some social action(4). In the course of history, we observe that mystics have created a cosmos out of chaos.

- 1) केतकीगन्धमाधरातुं स्वयमायान्ति षट्पदा : । - Subhashit.
- 2) यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदाऽत्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ - Gita 4.7
- 3) तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठः श्रुतयोर्विभिन्नाः नैको मुनिः
यस्य वचः प्रमाणम् । धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां ।
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थः ॥ - Panchatantra-4
- 4) अंतरी निर्मळ । वाचेने रसाळ । त्याचे गळा माळ असो नसो ॥ -Tukaram

3. Mysticism of Ramdas.

Ramdas of the 17th century, was one of the eminent mystics that this land has ever produced. Having achieved spiritual knowledge and competency through incessant efforts, devotion and meditation at Takali near Nasik he moved throughout India in general and Maharashtra in particular, to fulfil his mission of life. Perfect active devotion to God in man was his very nerve to teachings. This Universe with all its contents is as if glutted with God. Worship him and reap perfect satisfaction out of it (5). He adopted and insisted upon and preached the path of duty and activated his followers towards a right course of action. Ramdas exhorted his followers not to run away from the performance of duties but to boldly pursue them till they are rightly fulfilled. Then alone spirituality (Parmarth) can be had and not otherwise (6).

Ramdas was above all distinctions of caste, creed or religion. The path of devotion-bound activity knows no such base consideration. True devotion is always above all such discriminations. All constituents of a society are equally competent and useful in the process of social uplift (7). The days of glory would follow only if the hearts of man are bound with the ties of love and friendship (8). In one's life in society one should welcome and accept virtues without any hesitation, just as a bee approaches a flower for honey. Later, one should impart the same to many of one's fellow-men. Here a word of caution is also given and that is as regards practice of the same by oneself; otherwise words without practice are useless and ineffective (9). Vain ego,

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- 5) नागयण असे विज्वी । त्याची पूजा करीत जावो । या कारणे तापवावी ।
काया कोणी तरी । Dasbodh, 1-9-10
 - 6) आधी प्रपंच करावा नेटका । मग घ्यावे परमार्थविवेका । Dasbodh 12-1
 - 7) भेटो कोणी नर । घेड महार चांमार । राखावे त्याचे अंतर ।
या नाव भजन ॥ – Dasbodh Dashak 12-1
 - 8) राखावी बहुताची अंतरे । भाग्य येते तदनंतरे – Ibid.
 - 9) उत्तम गुण स्वये घ्यावे । ते बहुतास सांगावे ।
वर्तल्याविण बोलावे । ते शब्द मिथ्या – Dashak 12-9

conceit, falsehood, passion and arrogance are the disqualifications for a true devotee; while self-surrender, sweet words, sympathy, compassion and peace of mind would qualify him in the life of a good devoted citizen. Such devoted members of a society can alone further the cause of its glory.

View of Practice:-Theory-Practice relation is a point prominently considered in philosophy. In case of Ramdas, we find that practice was never to differ from theory (Vyavahar from Tattva). His contemporary saint Tukaram says that one should adore a man who acts in accordance with what he talks of(10). Ramdas emphasized purity of conduct in society very much. Goodness of human nature can only be known through good conduct, as the fragrance of sandal wood is known only through its paste(11). He enjoined men with just and moral conduct as birth in human society is only a chance (12). The view is also concerned with the relation of means to the end. Ramdas seems to pay more heed to the purity of motive. He asks his disciples to be more shrewd than the opponents. The wicked should be retaliated in the same coin. In all other cases of ideals, purity of means was to be followed. He deplored cowardice in face of cruel inroads by the barbarians. Following Gita, Ramdas considered courage (Abhaya) as the foremost of virtues. He never said, as Marx did, that ends justify the means. Along with purity of motive, tact blended with courage and valour was more attended to.

5) Achievements of Ramdas :- Achievements of Ramdas are known enough and well recognised by society of Maharashtra and by historians as well. His first and foremost achievement is that his teachings created a very good ground for independence of the people, by infusing the qualities like self confidence, fearlessness, love and friendship for fellow-men and love for social justice. Secondly, he organised the

10) बोले तैसा चाले त्याचीं बंदावी पाउले । Gatha

11) जंवरी चंदन झिजेना । तंव तो सुगंध कळेना । Dasboth 12-22

12) बहुत जन्माचा सेवट । नरदेह सांपडे अवचट ।

येथे वर्ता रे चोखट । नीति न्याये । Ibid. 11-31

masses with the help of devotion and dutifulness towards Rama- an emblem of duty and valour; and Hanuman- an emblem of selfless service. He also infused highest possible love for the motherland. Thirdly, he toured throughout India, established Hanuman temples, talked personally to thousands and inculcated the value of physical exercise in the younger generation. Fourthly, he wrote books like the Dasbodh and Manache Shloka to infuse wisdom in contemporary society. The same, if properly looked into, is also useful and inspiring in modern times. The latter book aims at superior powers of mind by controlling it properly in social life. We find that social context is nowhere ignored. Lastly, as a mystic, Ramdas, by his own example, set an ideal of a social worker and skilled reformer. He has exercised such a deep influence on the public of Maharashtra that Marathi mind shall remain indebted to him for all the time." There is no one on the surface of this earth who would look with ill intention, to a devotee of Samarth (Rama) 13. Such was his confidence.

6) Impact on Contemporary, Social & Political Life. It is not at all the case that mystics have nothing to do with society and government as such; and their view and attitude concerns only with individual progress which is essentially other-worldly. Bitter criticism is sometimes levelled against the mystic saints, that they have done much harm to secular progress of the society. Their other-worldly attitude has created much apathy towards social problems. Even if we look to lives of Shri Dneshwar, Eknath, Ramdas and Tukaram, we find that such charge is baseless and unjust. Ramdas strived throughout his life for the uplift of the society, in a secular way. He made incessant efforts to realise this end. Maths and Gymnasiums were established to implement day to day programme. Bhakti was only a means to that end. Strong devotion to the ideal can alone take to its realisation. Rama and Hanuman were to be understood as symbols of

13) समर्थाच्या सेवका वक्र पाहे ।

असा सर्व भूमंडळी कोण आहे ? ॥ Manache Shloka

the ideals. The ideals were virtues, social attitudes in power and selfless service. Establishment of justice in society, through devotion and service (Seva) was the target. In view of Ramdas, Government was powerful means to realise this end. Foreign rule is not to be tolerated because it is an obstacle in the way to this ideal. The way to Surajya can only pass through Swarajya and not otherwise. Swarajya thus was a means for him. At any cost it must be won. The individuals in the society must be organised for this purpose. Sympathy and sweet words bring individuals together at day to day well-planned occasions. Friendship strengthens the ties and unity solves many social and political problems. Such successful and easy deal with problems is called Bhagya by Ramdas (14).

Ramdas emphasised the ideal of equality at the social level. He, in this concern, criticised vain and meaningless practices prevailing in the Society (15). He deplored all social discriminations, high and low, pure and impure, rich and poor etc. All individuals are equally useful, although they vary in natural qualities. A squirrel, although a small animal, has its role to play in the construction of a big bridge (Setu). Ramdas thus successfully carried out his mission of unity (Loka-sangraha) by putting right individuals at right places and laid the foundation of Swarajya at the hands of Shivaji. Sambhaji also respected Ramdas very much.

7. Legacy of Ramdas as a Mystic Saint. Historians and the students of history cannot ignore in any way the career of Ramdas as a custodian and torchbearer of Indian culture. His works-Dasbodha and Manache Sholka are read by many regularly. He very skilfully handel down the essentials of culture in a very practical way. In a verse to Mind, he beautifully gives us two words 'Devakarya' and 'Swadharma' by which he meant Rashtrakarya and selfless performance of one's own duties. Here Swadharma is the

14) राखात्री बहुतांची अंतरे । भाग्य येते तदनंतरे । Dasbodh, 12-1

15) ब्राम्हणाचे ब्रम्ह ते सोवळे । शूद्राचे ब्रम्ह ते ओवळे । ऐसे वेगळे आगळे ।
येथ अनेचिना । Dasbodh 7.2.24,25,26

same, as used in Gita (16). Even at present, we find that the impact of Ramdas's teaching is very deeply rooted in the public mind of Maharashtra. Sajjangad, Jamb, Chafal have become the places of pilgrimage and inspiration. The names of Shivaji and Ramdas are taken to be an ideal pair of Shishya and Guru who together contributed to the glory of Maharashtra.



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- 16) सदा देवकार्यीं ज्ञिजे देह ज्याचा ।
 सदा राम नामे वदे नित्य वाचा ।
 स्वधर्मचि चाले सदा उत्तमाचा ।
 जगी धन्य तो दास सर्वोत्तमाचा ॥ Manache Shloka

Ramadasa's Dasabodha is itself a great history of the doings and thoughts of the Saint. It is a piece of Ramadasa's autobiography, as the Gatha of Tukarama constitutes his. A great man's life consists not of miracles connected with him, but verily of his thoughts and utterances. It is from that point of view that the Dasabodha is remarkably valuable as giving us the spiritual autobiography of Ramadasa.

R. D. RANADE
 (Mysticism in Maharashtra)

Om Spiritual Teaching of Sri Ramadas

M. S. DESHPANDE M. A.

I have been asked to read a paper on the Spiritual Teaching of Sri Ramadas, in this Symposium for which. I should like to offer my sincere thanks to the organisers. I have tried to write this paper so as to throw some light on the real nature of his Paramarth. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by all those who had no direct experience of spiritual life and experience. I should like to clear the misunderstanding in this paper. I hope this fresh interpretation of mine would be granted proper consideration by all those interested in leading a spiritual life. I don't expect any favour from them. I have been giving this correct interpretation based on my actual personal experience. Hence there should be no question about its veracity. I can confidently ask the elite to take it as a Gospel Truth. They are requested to listen to my words with full attention, ruminate over their contents deeply and then arrive at their conclusion. Mere superficial and casual attention won't do. That will not grant them correct understanding, of the real nature of Paramarth for which in addition to deep thinking, actual experience is absolutely necessary. They are hence requested to scrutinise my interpretation with the help of both these factors before expressing their considered opinion about it. I have taken the trouble of giving this correct interpretation lest the aspirant desirous of attaining the Vision and Bliss of the Lord may not be bogged in their endeavour by following a wrong path shown by the incorrect interpretation of his Paramarth both regarding its End as well as the Means. I could not but do that as no one has attempted to do justice to Saint Ramadas in this respect. So I have tried to serve both the Sadhakas as well as the Saint.

I would now place before the audience three aspects of his teaching that are grossly misunderstood. They belong to

the sphere of Moral and Spiritual Life. Let me begin with the moral life. Here Sri Ramadas tells us that we should carry on both moral and spiritual activities side by side. How to do it? Is it possible for us to do so? Can we perform both Prapanca and Paramarth simultaneously at one and the same time? Has anybody tried in that direction? Has he succeeded in attaining the goal of Paramarth thereby? Can anybody point out an instance of a Saint who can serve as a model to the aspirants in this respect? So far as I am aware, there is no Saint in the world who had reached the summit of God-realisation without paying exclusive attention to his spiritual pursuit as least for a sufficiently long period. It is only after attaining the highest spiritual experience that only a few of them tried to continue their worldly activities in a detached manner for the sake of moral and spiritual uplift of humanity. They led an exemplary moral and spiritual life and created interest among the people about them. They served as a model for all to emulate.

Now I will tell you what difficulty confronts us here. The problem is: Is it absolutely necessary for an aspirant to renounce his Prapanca in order that he may be fit to lead a spiritual life? The answer is both yes and no. In the initial stages he need not renounce it at all; on the other hand he should carry on his worldly duties with perfect diligence and care. He should treat it as a training ground and try to develop all the necessary qualities for facilitating his spiritual Sadhana. He should learn to lead a moral life, properly maintain his family and work for the public welfare. At the same time he should do his spiritual Sadhana prescribed by his Master. Thus he will have to combine both the duties in a harmonious manner. That is what Sri Ramdas has told us : अधी प्रपंच करावा नेटका । मगध्यावे परमार्थ विवेका । येथे आढस कर नका । विवेकी हो ॥ १३-१-१७ But this advice has been misinterpreted to imply; that a Sadhaka need not renounce his Prapanca at all for realising the Lord. This cannot be the object of his advice. Because in no other place he has told us : प्रपंच धुडका पेटला । मध्ये परमार्थ जळून गेला । ऐसे देखोनि तुम्हाला । कैसे बरे बाटले ॥ So we must combine both these

instructions and ascertain the real nature of his advice. We should not emphasise one at the cost of the other. Whenever we are to arrive at the correct interpretation of the teaching of any Saint, we should try to collect all his sayings about the subject and then try to realise its proper significance.

Another item in his moral teaching is about the relation between Effort and Grace. It is true that Sri. Ramadas has laid great stress on the need and efficacy of personal effort in our worldly life. He has, in one place, even identified Effort with God. (यत्न तो देव जाणावा). But this is not final opinion. He has also told us: रघुनाथ स्मरोन कार्य करावे। ते तत्काळचि सिद्धी पावे। कर्ता राम हे असावे। अभ्यंतरीं ॥ ६-७-३३. We must not, hence, fail to remember that our effort would never succeed unless it is backed by the Grace of the Lord. This is true both in the sphere of our worldly as well as spiritual life--more in the spiritual than in the worldly life. Nothing can be achieved without the help of God's Grace.

The next problem of misunderstanding regarding his teaching about moral life is the relation of Solitude and Society. It is generally supposed that Sri Ramadas regarded social work to be superior to meditation in solitude. It is true that he spent his whole life for the uplift of the society. He also trained his disciples to dedicate their lives for bringing about the moral and spiritual regeneration of the society and the nation. At the same time he has not failed to extol the utility of solitude for deep reflection and meditation. He asks : एकांतोण प्राणियाते बुद्धी कैची - "How can a person attain wisdom without solitude." He further advocates a harmonious combination between Solitude and Social welfare. Says he : अखंड एकांत सेवावा। अभ्यासचि करीत जावा। काळ सार्थकचि करावा। जनासहित ॥ " We should constantly adopt a life of solitude and engage ourselves in deep study of various problems and then utilise our time in the best possible manner in the work of social welfare." Thus he wants us to develop our intellectual and spiritual power in solitude and use it for the benefit of the society.

Now let us turn to the Spiritual Sadhana prescribed by him. Here also we observe a lot of misunderstanding prevalent among the scholars and aspirants. Many a scholar maintains that Sri Ramadas has given prominence to Reason in his Sadhana. He is considered as an advocate mainly of reason not only in worldly life but in spiritual life as well. No doubt, reason or discrimination enables a person to know what is good and bad--essential and nonessential in life. It is discrimination that leads one to spiritual life. That is all that it can do. It cannot proceed further. Reason has a limited capacity. It can work in the sphere of physical, mental and moral life only. It cannot enter into the spiritual field. It can merely induce and direct us to adopt spiritual life in preference to material life. But Sri Ramadas has given undue importance to reason. I can't understand how reason can enable any one to realise God. While describing the Sadhaka he says : देहबुद्धी विवेके करी । आत्मबुद्धी सदृढ धरो । श्रवण मनन केलेच करी । या नाव साधक ॥ 5-9-4 ॥ " A Sadhaka is one who tries to remove his body-consciousness and firmly entertains Self-consciousness through discrimination for which he listens to and reflects upon (Vedanta Philosophy) often and often." At the same time he tells us in another place: महावाक्य उपदेश भला । तरी त्याचा जप नाही बोलिला । तेथीना तो विचारचि केला । पाहिजे श्रोती ॥ 5 - 6 - 11 " The great sayings (Tat tvamasi-That Thou Art) is not to be repeated like a Nama- mantra. The Sadhaka should reflect upon its meaning." He has also advised his disciple in these words: सोऽहं आत्मास्वानंद धन । अजन्मा तो तूची जाण । हेंचि साधूचें वचन सदृढ धरावे ॥ 8-8-33 ॥ " You are the Atman full of bliss. You are the unborn Self. Fix your mind firmly on these words (of advice) of a Saint. " In this way we find that Ramadas considers Discrimination to be an important Sadhana which would enable a seeker to realise God. It seems that Sri Ramadas wanted to remove the rank superstition that was rampant in the society at that time. So he laid great stress on the efficacy of reason. He knew its limitations fully well. But somehow he has emphasised reason out of all proportion. He has even gone to the length of treating it as the only

Sadhana of realising God. He wanted people to realise that their body is not all and all. On the other hand it is the Atman residing in the body that is of supreme greatness. They should not care more for the upkeep and comfort of the body. They should always consider that they should ever try to realise Him and be guided by Him. He is the real source of knowledge, power and bliss. Sri Ramadas thus tried to develop their intellectual conviction about it. Hence he appears to have raised reason to the skies. Really reason cannot enable us to realise God. Realised Saints have advocated a different effective Sadhana. In fact Ramadas himself performed meditation on Gayatrimantra as well as Ramanama for realising the Lord and not mere Sravana—listening to and Manana—reflection on the Mahavakyas—the great sayings of the Upanisads. Still he thought it better, for reasons best known to him, to advise his disciples to perform this Sadhana which he had himself not performed.

In his dealing with the nine-fold Bhakti of the Bhagavata, he has laid greater stress on Atmanivedana and not on meditation on Divine Nama. His description of Sakhya Bhakti—Devotion of Love—contains an element of self-surrender to the Will of God no doubt. But immediately after he speaks of Self-identification viz : Atmanivedana. Really Atmanivedana does not mean Self-identification. It means complete surrender of everything to the Atman or God. But he has interpreted it in his own way so as to suit his philosophic teaching. In this teaching he appears to have closely followed Sri Sankaracharya's philosophy. There are different schools of thought who also preach this Sadhana for realising God.

Sri Ramadas also follows Sri Sankara almost literally. Like Sri Gaudapada he also mentions the non-existence of the world. Says he : "Why do you want to know about the nature of the world that has not been created at all ?" But I can neither agree with Sri Sankara nor with Sri Gaudapada. Theirs is an intellectual speculation, not spiritual experience. There cannot be non-existence of the world at any time. It is without beginning and without end. It only goes out of

might when the Saints experience the state of Samadhi. That is all. Secondly why should we consider the world to be merely a superimposition upon the Lord? Why should we not regard it as a mysterious creation of the Lord? The Lord is all-powerful and so He can create such a world with His wonderful power. Hence we may not entirely agree with the speculative philosophic position adopted either by Sankara or by Gaudapada, and consequently with that of Ramadas.

Now it is a question whether mere reflection of meditation on, and absorption in an idea, however lofty it may be, can ever lead to and enable one to attain actual realisation. The Great Sayings mentioned in the Upanisads are merely expressions or descriptions of spiritual experiences. We won't get spiritual experiences by meditating on them. So far as I am aware, no Saint has attained it through them. They have performed a separate Sadhana for realising them. This statement of mine is based upon my own personal experience as well as those of other great Saints whom I know.

Now let us consider the nature of spiritual realisation mentioned by Ramdas. His Atmajnana or Self-realisation consists of "seeing the Self by the self." What does he mean by "seeing"? Is it actual seeing with the inner eye? Or is it mere introspection? Many of his followers believe that it is nothing but trying to know one's nature through mental discrimination. But this interpretation appears to go against his assertion about Swarupa Darsana or Atma-Darsana or vision of the Self. The word Swarupa-darsana shows that it refers to actual vision of the Atman. It also indicates the Atman is not some abstract entity but the form of the body of the Sadhaka who had the vision of his Self. These are the two aspects of the spiritual experience of Sri Ramadas that have been grossly mis-interpreted by those who were innocent of such experience. How can they understand the exact nature of such experience unless they had attained it? Their intellect alone can not know its nature. So we cannot or should not accept their interpretation as in any way correct.

The same is the case with the interpretation of the Principal Sadhana advocated by Ramdas. I have stated already how Ramdas has laid undue emphasis on the efficacy of Reason or Discrimination both in the worldly as well as spiritual life. This was misconstrued by the intellectuals as his only Sadhana for realising the Lord. On the other hand, according to Ramdas it was not even the principal Sadhana; not to speak of the only Sadhana. His principal Sadhana was meditation on divine Nama. Though he has not mentioned it as such in his Dassbodha, his Manobodha and Abhangas specifically point out that it was meditation on Nama that was his principal Sadhana. He first practised it and then preached it. His verses in the Manobodha about meditation on Rama - Nama clearly indicate his preference for the same. The following free rendering of one his important Abhanga provides a conclusive proof for it.

“ It is Rama - Nama that is the essence of all Sadhana.... Nama is essence of all essences. It is the support to all (aspirants). Ramadas says; “there is no other way for attaining the ideal (the end of life).” Thus we find that Ramdas has regarded Divine Nama to be the only Sadhan for realising God. The use of Discrimination was merely a complimentary Sadhana and nothing more. But unfortunately that has been regarded as his main Sadhana. About the supreme efficacy of Nama I don't wish to elaborate here. I will deal with this all-important topic separately.

Another most important aspect of Ramadas's Spiritual Philosophy which is also entirely misconstrued is the nature of his spiritual experiences. It has been generally believed that he had attained the Vision of Sri Rama only. But what was the actual nature of this vision? It was not merely the vision of the human form of Rama. It was the vision of his Atman or Self. This is indicated in many of his Abhangas. His definition of Swadharama also suggests the same. “ Swarupirahane ha Swadharma ”--“ To reside in one's own Swarupa or Atman is Swadharma--one's primary duty ” This is what Ramadas has told. While enumerating the characteristics of a Siddha or perfect Yogi he mentioned Swarupirahane or

residing in ones own Atmanic Form, or to be united with the Atman. Thus we may definitely assert that the Vision of the Atman was one of his spiritual experiences. Ramadas has also mentioned in his Dasabodha supreme Light (Jyoti), Sound (Nada), Bliss (Ananda) as some of aspects of spiritual experiences that a Sadhaka attains. Not only that in a couple of Abhangas he has described his experience of what is termed " Spaceless Space " (Bayalige bayalu). This unique experience consists in the merging of " Gagna in Saghana " or "merging of Akasa in Cidakasa -- of material sky into spiritual sky of superb Light". This is the acme of spiritual experience rarely to be found in several Saints. Such is the supreme spiritual height attained by Ramadas. So we should ever remember that his Rama was Atmarama--as well as Avatar Rama. He had realised the identity between them. He was the Anataratma--the Inner Controller immanent both in the individual as well as in the universe

Finally I should like the elite to know that Speculative Philosophy of Sri Ramadas is not the same as his Spiritual Philosophy. Both are quite different from each other. The former is meant for the intellectuals while the latter is meant for spiritual aspirants. So one should not be mistaken for the other. I am required to sound this warning because the aspirants are very often mislead to take to the complimentary Sadhana of Discrimination by regarding it as the spiritual Sadhana. That they should not be mislead in this manner I am required to clarify this aspect. They should not forget that it is soulful meditation on the Divine Nama which is the real Sadhana that would enable them to attain the Vision and Bliss of the Lord. I should like to tell the aspirants that they may try to ascertain the importance and value of spiritual life through the proper use of their faculty of discrimination, develop their love for it and then adopt meditation on Divine Nama for their real progress in their spiritual endeavour.

Sri Ramadas is generally regarded as primarily a political and moral Philosopher and secondarily as a Saint. I wanted also to wipe out this erroneous impression that has taken

deep root in the minds of the intellectuals. They should note that Sri Ramadas was one of the greatest Saints of the world. He was primarily a realised Saint specially deputed by the Lord for the Moral and Spiritual regeneration of mankind. Politics was to him an unavoidable need of the time. He was forced to take up it on account of the peculiar condition of Bharat at that time. The political Revolution that he could bring about was the direct outcome of the Power and Grace attained by him from the Lord. It was really the Lord that had brought it about. He was quite aware of it. We should never lose sight of this all-important fact.

At the same time, I should like to point out one more aspect of the teaching of Sri Ramadas, that has been misunderstood and misrepresented, by almost all critics. Ramadas is supposed to place politics above spirituality. His spiritual endeavour is considered as an aid to his political work. He was primarily concerned with the establishment of Self-rule by removing the tyrannical rule of the Moslem rulers. This is thought to be the main object of his life. Far from it, it was not the political Self-rule but spiritual Self-rule that he tried his level best to establish. Political Self-rule was an off-shoot of spiritual Self-rule. He was thoroughly conscious of the fact that until the spiritual level of the people was sufficiently raised, no development either on the social or political level was at all possible. So he started his work by organising a Spiritual Brotherhood. That was his outstanding achievement. It is through this organisation that he could bring about revolution in the social and political sphere. He entirely relied upon the Grace of the Lord. He was firmly convinced in his heart that it is the Lord that does everything and that he can do nothing without His Grace. So he first tried to realise the Lord and attain His grace. Afterwards he taught others to do the same. But unfortunately nobody has paid proper attention to this aspect of his mission in life. He spiritualised not only political life but also every aspect both of individual and social life. Spiritual uplift was his main ideal. Establishment of spiritual Religion-Swadharma, was his primary business. As this aspect of his work is entirely neglected subsequently, the regeneration of social and political life brought about by

him could last long. No social and political reform of lasting nature could be brought about without basis of spiritual elevation of the people. This is the eternal Truth. None can afford to neglect it with impunity.

There are a few more aspects of the teaching of Sri Ramadas that require clarification. I shall consider one or two important ones here. First I will deal with his attitude towards the Brahmins. He considers them to be superior to all the classes. The reason is quite clear. They have inherited and preserved the best in our Sanatana Dharma for thousands of years from the hoary past. They have sacrificed everything for that. They didn't care for the grandeur of Royalty, nor for the splendour of wealth. They lead a simple austere life, preserved the eternal wisdom of our Seers in their brain as well as in their everyday life. They lead an ideal life, granted life-giving education to our budding youngsters in their hermitage and trained them to lead an ideal life. Even the Kings as well as the great millionaires highly appreciated their service and revered them wholeheartedly. The Kings considered it their sacred duty to extend all possible facilities to them in this selfless work of theirs. They even sought their advice when they were required to face difficult problems in their kingdom. Thus they had maintained their dignified position in society for quite long period. Even in adverse circumstances they tried to preserve their ancient wisdom and culture to the best of their ability. This can be seen in our modern times. It must have been present in his time as well to a greater extent. We can very well ascertain from his remarks that the condition of Brahmins had deteriorated a good deal. He has expressed his profound sorrow for their fallen condition. Still, he could not be unmindful of their brilliant inheritance and selfless service to the society in the past for so many centuries. He wanted that they should once again try to occupy their former exalted position and guide the people and inspire them to lead a noble and pious life both by their example as well as by their precept. Hence he advised them to emulate their great ancestors and try to preserve and enhance their spiritual tradition.

They were advised to acquire the requisite ability to play the noble role of erudite and disinterested guides of the society. He found by his nation-wide pilgrimage that there were practically none that were capable of shouldering this responsibility. So he had to organise a band of dedicated aspirants from this community and trained them to spread the Gospel of God-devotion as well as that of pure Nationalism among the people in Bharat in general and Maharashtra in particular. He also tried to inspire the Ksatriyas-the Marathas with the help of Sri Sivaji Maharaj. The love and respect that he had entertained for Sri Sivaji Maharaj was wonderful. Sri Maharaj also devoutly revered Sri Ramadas. It was this combination of the Brahma and Ksatra power that ultimately succeeded in establishing Swarajya in Maharashtra by extirpating the Moslem hegemony. So we need not suppose that Ramadas had no sympathy and respect for other communities. To achieve his primary object of bringing about spiritual and social regeneration of the people he had to take the help of the best elements in the society. So he selected the Brahmins and the Marathas. He never neglected the welfare of the other sections of the society. So it is not proper to consider Ramadas as partial to Brahmins only.

I will now deal with one more aspect of the teaching of Sri Ramadas, which has created a lot of trouble in social life. He has stated in one place that one should not get himself initiated by a Master belonging to a vile caste. The actual words used by him are Neeca Jatica. These words have been interpreted as one belonging to a lower caste. Ramadas probably might have in mind the Moslem Gurus of his times. Many Brahmins had been their disciples. These Moslem Fakirs had acquired some occult powers and had deluded several people including the Brahmins. They were out to increase their number by converting the Hindus through such deceitful means. Many had fallen an easy prey to their tempting methods. Hence Ramadas thought it necessary to warn such foolish people who allowed themselves to be duped by these pseudo saints, in a suggestive manner. These words might have been also used by him in

the sense of "vile nature". Thereby he might have referred to all the wicked Masters belonging to all the castes. Moreover, Ramadas, like Sri Purandardas, believed that only those who had realised the Brahman were alone entitled to be called Brahmins. All others were Sudras. So the words "Neeca Jati" need not be taken to mean "lower cast". That he was not for the abolition of caste-distinction is clear. However he was for unity in diversity. He loved all alike. He tried for the uplift of all classes of people. His moral and spiritual message was meant for all alike. He was engaged in conveying the Gospel of God-devotion to one and all. This being the case we would be doing rank injustice to his sacred memory if we accuse him of being partial to a particular section of our society.

I have frankly placed my views before this elite so that they may try to clear the unfortunate misunderstanding that has undermined the supreme all-sided greatness of Saint Ramadas one of the greatest Saints of all times and climes.



"A simple fool can be taught; but a learned
fool is incurable"

— St. Ramadasa
(from Spiritual Treasure
of Saint Ramadasa,
by V. H. Date)

Karunastakas of Ramadasa—A Psychological Approach

— PADMA KULKARNI, M. A.

The Karunastakas of Ramadasa form part of daily recitation of many devout aspirants. Ramadasa is known to have received initiation from Lord Rama Himself. He had been meditating on the Mantra imparted to him and had been pining for the vision of the Lord. The central theme of the Karunastakas is a prayer to Rama to reveal Himself before the vision of Ramadasa. They are called Karunastakas for they implore the Lord to shower His Karuna or Compassion. Ramadasa's feelings and emotions take on a verbal garb and find a most natural out-let through the Karunastakas. Most of them appear to have been written before he had a full-fledged vision of God and are, therefore, an evidence of what is termed in Psychology of Religion, the Dark Night of the Soul. In this they stand on a par with similar Abhangas of Namadeva and Tukarama. They have a strong appeal to an aspirant who goes through such travails in his spiritual life. If these wailings leave a reader somewhat sad they at the same time re-assure him by pointing out that not even an iron-strong mind like that of Ramadasa is free from pre-vision sufferings.

As long as man is merged in worldly affairs he indulges in many things. He entertains a number of emotions towards things and men. Barring incidental situations there is no emotional excitement. In the hum-drum life-stream of an ordinary man there are faint bubbles and no whirl-pools. A common man displays no well-defined 'master-sentiment' in Mac Dougall's sense, i.e., no single sentiment asserts itself with sufficient clarity and force to dominate the whole of his personality. His sentiments, inspite of conflict between some of them, are fairly well-arranged and balance themselves. Sometimes there are contrary emotions simultaneously present and we get a picture of an unsteady

mixture. There is, for example, conflict between duty towards family and duty towards the nation and a man is caught in a state of indecision. But such conflicts resolve themselves and the lost balance is restored in a normal man without much ado. In an ardent devotee, on the other hand, God-Love takes on Sovereign importance, becomes the master-sentiment so that all other emotions re-arrange themselves in a hierarchical fashion with God-Love at the apex. Passion for sense-objects goes at the rock bottom while characteristics like kindness and compassion take intermediate places. His actions are pointers to his immense attachment to God. He will confront weariness and toil, undergo any travail without hesitation or complaint in his endeavour to reach the God-head. Inhibitive power of physical stress and strain is not traceable in him as he forgets all physical pain when his God-vision is at stake. The mind leaves off its proverbial way of wandering as God-Love stream lines its movements. There is no fragmentation of energy as the vital functions are controlled by the centripetal force of attainment of God.

When, however, these well-guided actions are stalled, when intense meditation fails to produce any fruit, when God remains tantalisingly away and appears to make a mockery of a devotee's efforts, the dark night results. Frustration reigns supreme; the devotee feels dejected; pity, pain and fear take possession of his mind; he is ashamed of his lust for the flesh; vexed by his thought that he is rejected by God, he is enveloped in despair. In such a state a devotee pours out the wailings of his heart and solicits grace, his religious melancholy finding expression in sombre prayers. Having put a loving confidence in God, he wants to give up everything for God; but ironically enough this surrender remains incomplete as a vestige of egoism still clings. There is still a feeling: "I am surrendering". The state is bound to last till the last penny of the ancient debt in the form of egoistic pride is paid back. This is achieved very gradually and at the end prayer would be no longer necessary. The reins would be handed over to the Lord and the devotee would gladly remain an instrument in His hands, Till such

time, the dark night, the despair and prayers continue. The Karunastakas of Ramadasa are an expression of such a state of mind.

Though Ramadasa is tough - minded as a teacher, he is equally tender-minded as a devotee. His soul had become extremely sensitive because of afflictions due to separation from God. The Karunastakas are transparent enough to exhibit Ramadasa's utter distress. His heart was restless for it wanted to rest in God. The Karunastakas are full of humility and pathos, which is punctuated by repentance. There is longing for God and consciousness of one's own inability to accomplish anything by oneself. There is helplessness regarding life's experience and weariness regarding the state of affairs. There is disgust about the ways of the world and anxiety for the upliftment of all. Ramadasa feels forlorn and forsaken, blames his lot that he had to come into the world and pants to re-unite with God. There is a firm faith that Rama alone is the Saviour, the Redeemer, the omni-potent, while he himself merely a mean creature. This is accompanied by a steady reliance on God's benevolence, His kindness, His love, and Ramadasa throws entirely on His mercy and appeals to Him through these panegyrics. The most important characteristic of these orisons is not their poetic quality but utter sincerity and devotion of heart; a frank confession of one's mistakes of omission and commission and preparedness to discard all things as dross if they do not conduce to God-vision. The entreaties contain an ardent desire to use one's body and mind for the service of God and a bright hope for a blissful life in God. Thus a survey of Karunastakas reveals an intricate interplay of different feelings and emotions out of which we may pick up only a few like bewilderment, longing, creatureliness, self-reproach and surrender, for discussion. We shall also note that though on the surface we come across pessimism, there is always present an under-current of hope. That is why Ramadasa's mind some times reaches the lowest depths of despair while at other times it mounts on the highest pinnacle of re-assurance. We shall finally conclude our account by finding in Ramadasa the evidence

of the accepted truth in the Psychology of Religion that when the Dark Night comes, the rosy morning would not be far behind.

Some verses clearly reflect Ramadasa's mental condition immediately after he ran away from home and arrived at Panchavati near Nasik for practising austerities. Verses with the refrain बुद्धि दे रघुनायका (grant me wisdom, Oh ! Lord) belong to this period. His mind is completely bewildered and he is praying to Rama to set his intellect right. 'I do not possess intelligence, wisdom or learning, but am only an ignorant fellow. Please tell me what I should do. I have neither food nor shelter. I have left my home and am now forlorn. You, who are so fond of devotees, should guide me now.'

The Karunastakas originate from Ramadasa's heart-felt longing for God. He does not have interest in anything except God as the Chataka has interest only in the waters from the clouds : जल घर कण आशा लागली चातकासी. The Karunastakas are in this connection comparable to Tulasidasa's चातक चौतीसा, the thirtyfour verses where Tulasidasa regards himself as a Chataka who is longing for the rain. They exemplify अनन्यभक्ति or one-pointed devotion. Every thing else is discarded as rubbish : वमक वमन जैसे त्यागिले सर्व काहीं. As Professor R. D. Ranade remarks : The Chataka's one aim is to turn its eyes longingly towards the cloud; but the cloud may easily be accompanied by such destructive phenomena, as lightning, thunder, hailstorm and even a thunder-bolt. Tulasidasa takes advantage of such a meteorological scene to describe the extra-ordinary devotion of the Chataka for the cloud. The घनश्याम to the चातक is the 'one belief, one power, one hope' : एक भरोसो एक बल एक आस विश्वास. Even if the wings of the चातक, says Tulasidasa, be reduced to bits by the falling hail, it will continue to look longingly at the cloud of mercy. Even if the cloud (the उपल of निरुक्त) may rumble fiercely, and send down a merciless thunder-bolt, will the चातक have any other object for its adoration than the

cloud itself ? Even if the चातक were to fall into the holy waters of the Ganges, being shot by the arrow of a huntsman, it will not allow its beak to be contaminated by the holy waters, but will turn it up-wards to the cloud of Mercy and give up the ghost. It will never allow the garment of devotion to be even slightly scratched (1). A first-hand vision of God was the only ardent desire of Ramadasa. This longing coupled with the torment of Samsara forms the burden of two other sets of verses ending in तुजवीण रामा मज कंठवेना (I cannot live without you) and सर्वोत्तमा कै मज भेटो देसी (When will you manifest before me, Oh Lord of Lords ?) In verses describing longing for God, Ramadasa has exemplified an important psychological truth, namely, pain expands time while pleasure shortens it. When Ramadasa says : जळत हृदय माझे जन्म कोट्यानुकोटी (My heart is undergoing pain for crores of lives) it may well be अतिशयोक्ति अलंकार. But it also corroborates the findings of psychologists as regards perception of time. When we witness wonderful and exciting programmes, time flies before we know it. On the other hand, when we have to bear with pain and disappointment we feel that the sun and the moon have halted in their course and all watches have stopped. उदासीन हा काळ कोठें न कंठें, Says Ramadasa. A moment expands into eternity, thus lending a sharp edge to the already present suffering. His only cry is to see Rama- पाहावें तुला हें जिवीं आर्त मोठें. But the period of waiting still lingers on.

Ramadasa says that he is but an ignorant and humble servant of God- असा दीन अज्ञान मी दास तूझा. This humbleness which is a characteristic feature of religious feeling is termed 'creature-consciousness' or 'creature-feeling' by Otto. "It is the emotion of a creature, abased and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures" (2). Otto further remarks that

1) Panthway to God in Hindi Literature, P. 365

2) Rudolph Otto : The Idea of the Holy, P. 10.

the Lord is looked upon as 'aweful majesty' and in contrast with the 'over-powering nature of God, there is a feeling of being but 'dust and ashes' and 'nothingness' (3). The lines उदंड ऐकिली कीर्ती पतितपादना प्रभु । मी एक रंक दुर्बुद्धि (Your fame spreads far and wide. I am just a poor creature.) or आम्हां अनाथांसी तू एक दाता (I am a popper, you are the over-lord), are examples in point. This feeling of creatureliness, bitterness or depreciation, the idea of diminution of self into nothingness or disvaluation (4) runs through a number of verses. Such concepts of one's own dwarfishness are a result of the fact that Ramadasa (or for that matter, any aspirant) has to wage a battle on two fronts. The outside world tempts him while the inside mind eludes him and in both the cases he finds himself over-powered. The vanity of Samsara, a powerful incentive to spiritual life, is clearly seen in many of the verses. The sense objects only lead us astray and compel us to be re-born while the relatives for whom we ceaselessly toil gather round us for selfish ends only to leave us at the time of adversity : सकळ जन भवाचे आथिले वैभवाचे or जिवलग जिव घेती प्रेत सांडूनि जाती. The suffering persists : अनुदिन अनुतापें तापलो रामराया. The worldly life is futile – it will not bear any spiritual fruit : समाधान तें कांही केल्या घडेना. Thus the battle with the world goes on. To face the attacks from the world what is required is a strong mind; but here too Ramadasa finds himself unarmed. To the missiles thrown by the world, the mind adds some of its own. It is uncontrollable. अचपळ मन माझें नावरें आवरीता. At the same time it is fickle. The mind makes resolves but does not possess the firmness to carry them through. Psychologists tell us that we should never allow our resolves to evaporate. If we decide to do something we must see it through-at any cost. Otherwise, the mind gets into the habit of making and breaking resolves. In this connection, an abandoned resolve is more harmful than no resolve at all. Who does not have the painful experience of not being awakened by the morning

3) Ibid., P. 20

4) Ibid., P. 52

alarm simply because we have for some previous mornings heard the alarm and slept on? The alarm loses its significance and so while it rings on and invades the auditory apparatus, the brain refuses to take notice of it. Once we fail to put a resolve into practice the same inaction is likely to be repeated. Such fickleness of mind is reflected in utterances like : घडि घडि त्रिघडें हा निश्चयो अंतरीचा (At every step the resolve breaks), or चपळपण मनाचें मोडिता मोडवेना (I cannot overcome the fickleness of my mind). On the back-drop of the infirmity of the mind the drama of the conflict between passions and reason is enacted. The mind runs after the sense objects while reason is pulling the reins. Passions let loose the mental energies which reason wants to inhibit. 'Come, come', tempt the impulses; 'Stop, stop' cries the reason. Passions and reason live in worlds all their own without almost any intersection. Their constitution is different, and they pull a man in opposite directions. Without a powerful intellect, fortified by God's grace, man is carried away by impulses : तुजविण मज नेती जंबुकी वासना रे. The attachment to body is a potent and invincible force. देहबुद्धि वळेना. Hence the supplication of Ramadasa to get his mind cleared of all crooked tendencies by divine mercy : कुबुद्धी कुडी वासना नोरत्नावी.

The Karunastakas are full of self-reproach, selfloathing and self-condemnation. A burning consciousness of creatureliness dominates it. Past mistakes are owned and confessed. It requires courage to admit one's mistakes and Ramadasa had it abundantly. भजनरहित रामा सर्वही जन्म गेला। स्वजन जन धनाचा व्यर्थ मीं स्वार्थ केला। Ramadasa's self-severity is an outcome of his most ardent desire to work, to work more and to work still more. This explains the verses with a refrain of pathetic utterances like तुझा दास मी व्यर्थ जन्मासि आलों ॥. There are so many devotees, says he, 'who underwent great austerities, but I am only a burden on the earth' नव्हे कार्यकर्ता भूमिभार झालो. I cannot tear myself away from my kith and kin: सकळ स्वजन माया तोडितां ताडवेना. Melancholy is eating into my very vitals and I have become desperate'. In another

prayer, रघूनायका काय कैसें करावें, Ramadasa expresses a great despair : ' I have left my near and dear ones, and yet am not recipient of your grace. What should I do. ? Caught in such a plight, Ramadasa says that he has no hope of attaining any good : स्वहीत माझे होतां दिसेना. His heart-rending condition is clear in नये धीर डीळां सदा नीर लोटें (tears are flowing from my eyes)- Overcome completely by helplessness and contempt for oneself he is suffering from excruciating pain and cries aloud : बहुताळ भेटावया प्राण कूटें (I am dying for you). This is the climax of suffering.

The necessity of self-surrender is writ large in the Karunastakas. It is a corrective to past mistakes; thus self-reproach in Ramadasa culminates in surrender. He gives up every thing for the sake of God: तनु मन धन माझे राखवा रूप तूजे. Only after giving up every thing, can one hope for God's grace. "Fling yourself upon God's providence without making any reserve whatever—take no thought for the morrow,—sell all you have and give it to the poor, only when the sacrifice is ruthless and reckless will the higher safety really arrive" (5). When the surrender is genuine and total as in काया वाचा मनोभाव तुला मी म्हणवीतसे (With body, speech and mind I have surrendered unto you) God is at the beck and call of the devotee. Kumaravyasa, the great Kannada poet-saint, describes how God ran to help Draupadi. Seeing that she had thrown herself entirely upon His mercy and replying to her entreaties Lord Kṛṣṇa said, " I am indebted to her. She is the creditor, I am the debtor" (6). The same idea of God being the debtor is found in Jñānesvara: तें ऋणवैपण देखांनि अंगी । मी आपुल्या उत्तर्णत्वालागी । भक्ताच्या तनुत्यागी । परिचर्या करी ॥ (Jñānesvari, VIII, 131). The devotee by his unswerving attachment to me has made me a debtor and in order to free myself from that burden I serve him at the time of death. In a similar strain Ramadasa mentions that God soothes the devotee at the crucial moment of death रघुवर मुखदाता सोडवी अंतकाळीं. What greater assurance is needed by a devotee ?

5 W James: The Varieties of Religious Experience, p 252

6. कर्णाटभारतकथामंजरी,—उद्यानपर्व, V, 7

A devotee who has completely surrendered himself to God realises that God is the only saviour. He alone can realise the pathetic condition of the devotee: तुझविण करुणा हे कोण जाणेल माझी. There is infinite confidence in the benevolence of God. Thus some verses end on a very optimistic note: 'My Lord is really great. While I am praying and counting days. He will suddenly manifest Himself before me. I shall then hold His feet firm: अवचट मज भेटी होत घालीन मीठी. Ramadasa's Lord is through and through compassionate. Attributes like परमदिनदयाळ, कारुण्यसिंधु, दयासिंधु, भक्तवाळ, भक्तवत्सल are repeated in these supplications.

The Karunastakas represent a heavy coating of pathos with which Ramadasa's mind gets painted at one stage in his spiritual career. But it is not its original colour. That colour is robust optimism, so much so that phrases like बोलतो दीनवाचा appear to be incongruous in his mouth. The Karunastakas are out-pourings of deep anguish and we know that "Such anguish may partake of various characters, having sometimes more the quality of loathing, sometimes that of irritation and exaggeration or again of self-mistrust and self-despair, or of suspicion, anxiety, trepidation, fear" (7) All this, however, is temporary. In a saint this condition expresses only an initial phase and never the permanent state. Saints may begin with despair, but never end with it. James quotes Goethe who says that his life has been nothing but pain and burden. 'I can affirm that during the whole of my 75 years I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being' (8). This is never the case with saints who always end with a sense of contentment. Words of blessedness fall from their lips. Then they remain only for conferring benefaction on humanity. आतां उरलों उपकारसुखा, says Tukarama. We may also remark that the dark night in Ramadasa was made darker by the prevailing circumstances which contributed to his frustration. While on pilgrimage, Ramadasa was a witness

7. W. James : The Varieties of Religious Experience, P.126

8 Ibid, P. 113

to religious tortures as well as invasion by foreign powers. People had lost their manliness and hope in the face of formidable enemies. They were not united, had forgotten the greatness of their own religion and hence fell an easy prey to all sorts of assaults. Another very unfortunate cause of people's miserable condition was an unprecedented draught. It had rendered them weak both physically and mentally. When their very survival was at stake, religion and social revivals were a long way off. Ramadasa saw with his own eyes unimaginable human suffering and people's tales unfolded stories that would "harrow up one's soul and freeze one's blood and make hair stand on their ends". Any other man's enthusiasm and courage would have been squeezed out of him by the unfortunate happenings. But not Ramadasa's. Divine inspiration always supported him from inside and in spite of all adversities he toiled tirelessly and infused life in people's dead minds. By his sincere, selfless and spirited efforts he enlightened the common man and raised widespread organisations the like of which we rarely come across in history. Ramadasa himself has said that he was anxious about the welfare of the world right from his Childhood : चिन्ता करितो विश्वाची. He also says that he had received Lord Rama's blessings in his endeavour : राघवाचा वर पावलो सत्वर। जनाचा उद्धार करावया॥ (9). This lends support, further remarks Dr. S. D. Pendse (10) to an incident narrated by Giridhar in his समर्थ प्रताप. Disheartened by the ephemerality of the world and momentariness of the human body, Ramadasa was about to hurl himself into a lake in the Himalayas in a kind of holy desperation. But he was dissuaded from the act by Lord Rama himself declaring तुम्हासी जगदोद्धार करणें आहे। तुमची तनु ते आमची तनु आहे। दोन्हीं तपें तुमची रक्षिली काया हे। धर्मस्थापनेकारणें॥ समर्थ प्रताप, III 8. (You have to establish Dharma on the earth. Your body is a sacred gift from me and I have protected it for twentyfour years so that it

9. See, डॉ. दा. पेंडसे, राजगुरु समर्थ रामदास, P. 7

10. Ibid., Pp. 7-8

should be utilised for the revival of righteousness). The point to be noted is that Ramadasa's frustration is never his inherent character but only a passing phase in his spiritual career.

Dark night that it is, it is bound to end in a glorious morning. Thus in Karunastakas themselves we find that the initial despair has lost its sharpness, the inner storm is laid to rest, and stability and equipoise are restored. Ramadasa no longer feels lost and damned. Having attained to real devotion he wants to bask in it. In the prayer रघूनायका मागणें- हेंचि आतां - he says: Let me feast my eyes on your form and hear your praises; let me find joy in your devotion. Be my constant companion. Make me your humble devotee. In spite of such Saguna Bhakti, Ramadasa had his eyes always set on the Nirguna. As he remarks elsewhere: मी भक्त ऐसें म्हणावें । आणि विभक्तपणेचि भजावें । हें अवघेंचि जाणावें । विलक्षण ॥ दासबोध, IV. 9. 4. Truly speaking, the realisation of the Nirguna alone marks the end of the dark night of the soul whereby the saint enjoys the enlivening warmth of the morning of divine grace. In this connection some verses of Ramadasa are very significant(11). "I have surrendered myself to you and the ephemeral mind has vanished... My doubts have been dispelled, and I have no thought of the body. What I pray for is only His Grace":

आत्मनिवेदन झालें । अंतर विराले गेलें फिटला रे तो संदेहो । जावो अथवा राहो देहो । दास म्हणें सदा राहो । रघुनाथाची कृपा ॥

11. समर्थकृत पदपदांतरे, सं. शं. श्री. देव, p. 237.

Ramadasa on ' the Guru '

S. G. DESHPANDE, M. A.

The sacred term 'Guru' has been made corrupt by thoughtless worldly-minded people who use it to denote all sorts of persons unwarrantedly. A Brahmin priest is called a guru or an 'acharya' simply because he can prattle a few Sanskrit scriptural passages. Any (even the most worldly-minded) teacher in a school, college or a university is also called a guru and he too is elated when so addressed. Astrologers and palmists, hynotists and mystery-mongers, quacks and spiritualists also pass for gurus. Such is the pitiable state of affairs today. And such was the state of affairs in Ramadasa's times also. So far as there are persons who want to use (a so-called) religion for sensual satisfaction, such is bound to be the case; and it is only such persons who form the majority in every community at any place and time. It is difficult, almost impossible, to persuade them to genuine religion. Howsoever one may wish, spiritual life is meant only for a chosen few. There can never be a mass-Religion. The 'Razor's Edge' of the pursuit of Truth is for those alone who are prepared to abandon everything else, howsoever unpalatable this truth might be. If you talk of genuine religion, people will turn a deaf ear to it. They will get along with their religion, and continue to use terms in a corrupt fashion, for, they want to be 'considered religious' (by their own selves as well as others) and not to 'be religious'.

But there are a few who are sincere, and really want to understand such things. They would get out of the muddle of customary superstitions, if only a wise man exposes these and presents before them the truth. It is here that Ramadasa's teachings on 'the Guru' are relevant.

There has been a foolish belief among the orthodox Hindus that the Brahmin (with a caste reference) alone is the custodian of all religion and spirituality. His sole qualification for being considered a religious teacher is that he is born in

a certain caste. Many Brahmins know nothing of religion proper and yet they profess and preach it; and ignorant masses believe in their teachings. Such selfish Brahmins who preach in order to achieve their mundane ends, are themselves deluded, and delude others by presenting before them a fake religion. Ramadasa gives a critical assessment of this harmful state of affairs. It is believed, he says, that the Brahmin is the guru for all .., that such is the dictate of the vedas, that a Brahmin deserves the respect of all,, even if he is a fool, and that any view going against this customary notion is a heresy(Dasabodha. 5. 1. 6, 10, 15, 17). Ramadasa, refuting this view, further says that the use of a Brahmin (if there is any) is at most that he guides (or misguides ?) ignorant people in regard to various rituals (Ibid , 5. 1, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31). All such rituals are absolutely useless (Ibid., 5 1.24). Worse, they are meant for enjoying their consequences in some future existence- which implies that they become the cause of future births, entangling the soul more and more in bondage, instead of liberating it (Ibid., 5. 1. 32). You may (at the prescription of the Brahmin priest) do all sorts of rituals, worships, pilgrimages and so many such things; but none of these-not even all of these together-can help you to escape the chain of births (and deaths); unless and until you obtain an immediate knowledge of God by the grace of a Guru (who has himself such knowledge), liberation is impossible(Ibid ,5.1.34,35,36).

For most of those who think they are religious, religion is just a means to obtain mundane things. Their prayers, and telling beads, their fasts and observances, their bathings in holy rivers and prostrations to deities are prompted by desires for wealth, progeny, fame etc. Naturally, therefore, they would seek a 'guru' who would preach such a mundane religion. And there is always an abundance of 'such' gurus. Like the disciples who flock to them (perhaps more still), their interest also is set upon fulfilling sensual cravings and a luxurious life without exertion. Knowing that the disciples are interested in a religion which would not make any stringent demands, they teach a religion consistent with sensuality and attachment; and

this preaching of a palatable religion secures for them a large following, Ramadasa unsparingly exposes and sharply condemns 'such' gurus. One who indulges, he says, in whatever he likes licentiously, is not a guru,, but worse than a wretch. Those so-called gurus, who do not make their disciples practise spiritual disciplines, do not make them control their senses, should be discarded. Some gurus sell themselves for money, others dance to the tune of their disciples (to please them); they become pitiable because of their attachment (to sense-pleasure); their sensual craving forces them to preach whatever suits the taste of the disciples. (Ibid., 5. 2.20, 21, 23, 24).

Another variety of religious preachers consists of intelligent persons who have some scholarship coupled with a capacity to give impressive discourses. Many sincerely religious people are attracted to them. But these preachers only talk big; let them get down the pulpit, and they get lost in sensul longing; They may be learned, but they have no firm conviction. Again they are after yogic powers in order to satisfy their sense-cravings. They prattle scriptural passages, but are obsessed by sense-cravings. Such persons can never meet God since God-realization is possible only after ill-craving is destroyed in its very roots. And consequently they can never be genuine Gurus (Ibid., 5. 2.31, 32, 35, 36).

There are gurus and gurus, says Ramadasa. Mystery-mongers, hypnotists, quacks and alchemists are also (unfortunately) conferred upon, the title of guru, as also those who teach various branches of secular knowledge and those who teach various crafts and skills; again one's parents are also considered gurus; but the Guru who takes one to the other shore of the ephemeral world is quite different from all these. (Ibid., 5. 2. 1 to 7).

This treatment of Ramadasa contains certain very important truths.(1) Religion should not be identified with anything and everything which has a quasi-mystical halo about it. Religion is not a means to attain mundane ends such as getting

cured of diseases. That a certain person has some (so-called) supernatural powers does not by itself entitle him to the rank of a Guru. In fact these powers ('siddhis') are a hindrance in the march towards spiritual enlightenment; and therefore, being entangled in them necessarily indicates a deviation and degeneration. Naturally the possibility of such persons being Gurus is out of question. (2) Teachers of secular pursuits are gurus only in a secondary sense. The title 'guru' may be conceded to them just to express one's respect for them and one's gratefulness for having learnt something from them. What one learns from such teachers is secular knowledge ('Apara Vidya') which by itself does not have the capacity to make one spiritually illumined. Professional teachers can teach only such skills and crafts which would enable the pupil to earn his livelihood; they cannot secure for him salvation. Hence such teachers, though useful and necessary, are not gurus in the real sense of the term. The real Guru confers upon the disciple that knowledge after attaining which nothing else remains to be known; he gives him spiritual knowledge ('Para Vidya'). (3) The scriptures teach that one's parents ought to be respected as gurus. But this dictate should not be interpreted literally. This injunction only indicates that one should entertain an attitude of reverence towards one's parents, and that parents should be considered next only to the real Guru. One should be obedient to one's parents in regard to everything except their (possible) dissuasion from the spiritual path; nay, one should positively disobey them if they obstruct the spiritual path in any way. If and when the command of parents conflicts with that of the spiritual Guru, one should disobey the former.

One is hopelessly lost in this muddle of the abundance of false gurus. For want of a genuine Guru, says Ramadasa, one is sure to be misled, and then come to grief like a blind man slipping down into a ditch (Ibid., 5. 1. 37). The real Guru opens the sight of the seeker who is helplessly blind to the right path (Ibid., 5. 1. 38). Life is fruitless without the grace of such a Guru; and without him there is no way of putting an end to misery (Ibid., 5. 1. 39). By his grace God becomes manifest, putting an end to all miseries once

for ever (Ibid., 5. 1. 40). All saints of yore had their respective Gurus (Ibid., 5.1.41). Even incarnations of God, such as Rama and Krishna are not an exception to the rule (Ibid., 5. 1. 42). Ultimately, anyone who seeks liberation must have a spiritual Guru without whom liberation is impossible (Ibid., 5. 1. 44).

The Guru, in the real sense of the term, is he who instructs into the mysteries of God-realization, who dispels the darkness of ignorance, and unites the individual soul with the Cosmic Soul. He is one who erases the separation of the Lord and His devotee. He is one who liberates ailing creatures caught in the net of 'Maya'. He alone is the Guru who, imparting Supreme Knowledge, instantly cuts off the chain of desire which makes one whirl and whirl in the intricate wheel of births. The Guru is he alone who breaks through the words of the scripture and bestows upon the disciple an immediate cognition of the Reality. He alone is the Guru who makes God of a previously insignificant disciple. (Ibid., 5. 2. 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16).

But how to recognize that a certain person is a qualified Guru ? The seeker after a Guru has no spiritual understanding, and so he cannot judge the spiritual attainments of anyone. The only way open to him of judging the fitness of a person in order to accept him as the Guru is to judge him from his external demeanour. Ramadasa, therefore, depicts the demeanour of a qualified Guru. Such a Guru should have the following characteristics. He should have clear knowledge (of God), coupled with an absolute satisfaction as its natural consequence, and should be continuously immersed in God-consciousness (Ibid., 5.2.45). Burning renunciation must be tangible in him (Ibid., 5. 2. 46). He should be constantly engaged in listening to or talking of spiritual matters alone (Ibid , 5. 2. 47). In short, the characteristics of a genuine Guru are Knowledge, renunciation, chanting the glories of God, meditation, spiritual preaching etc. Only he, who has all these characteristics together, deserves to be a Guru, and none else (Ibid., 5. 2. 52, 53).

On Writing The Life Of Samartha Ramadasa. ×

NIRANJAN ZAMINDAR,

M. A. LL. B

I have been facing a number of difficulties in writing the life of Samartha Ramadas. First, all of his works in Marathi are not yet published. Second, there is no proof of the authenticity of whatever has been published; for instance, there is a difference of opinion among scholars in regard to his Hindi verses. Third, after the late Shri Deo, no one has made a research in regard to Samartha's pilgrimage at the probable places which he visited; for instance, Samartha had stayed in Ayodhya for eleven months; but no investigations have been made there. The followers of Ramananda believe that Ramadas belonged to their sect; the great Mantra "श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम (Shri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Rama) belongs to their school. Fourth, we do not find a description of the nature of Samartha's Rama-bhakti. No Arati or Stotra on Sitadevi composed by Samartha has been discovered. There are a few Stotras addressed to Tulaja Bhavani. Fifth, many consider his Arati of Lord Hanuman a form of Kundalini Yoga; 'Maruti' is a term of Kundalini Yoga. Sixth, in his Hindi verses, there is a frequent mention of 'Allah' and 'Paigambar'. Seventh, in many of his compositions, we find the impact of Sufism. Eighth, his Hindi compositions contain many proofs of his Krishna-bhakti. Ninth, in his Hindi compositions we have a clue to his Madhura-bhakti. Tenth, in Namaji's Bhaktmal (commentary of the King of Rewa), we come across a reference to one Ramadas on the banks of the river Sarayu. Does it refer to Samartha? Eleventh, it is true that Samartha has advocated Non-dualism (Advaita); but in his works, we clearly notice the impact of Dualism (Dvaita). Twelfth, the forehead mark, characteristic of the school of Samartha, appears like that of the Nimbark School. Had Samartha practised the 'Dvaitadvaita' discipline of the Nimbark School? Thirteenth, in Giridhara's 'Samartha-

Pratapa', there is a mention of Samartha's disciple being a worshipper of Lalita. Was Samartha a devotee of Sri Vidya ?

I consulted in this connection His Holiness Sri Karapartri Maharaj and H. H. Sri Vidyaranya Maharaj. They hold that saints practise various forms of spiritual disciplines, and guide others in conformity with their qualifications.

In the social context, it is a fact that Samartha was respected in the whole society. Samartha strived for the uplift of the whole society. He was not just a mystic-saint. Mahatma Gandhi writes: 'There is much heroism in the 'abhangas' of Tukarama and the 'shlokas' of Ramadas'. I do not see any point in the Talakari-Dharakari dispute. □ So also the way in which saints have been presented in the social context, under the impact of Western thought, is misleading.

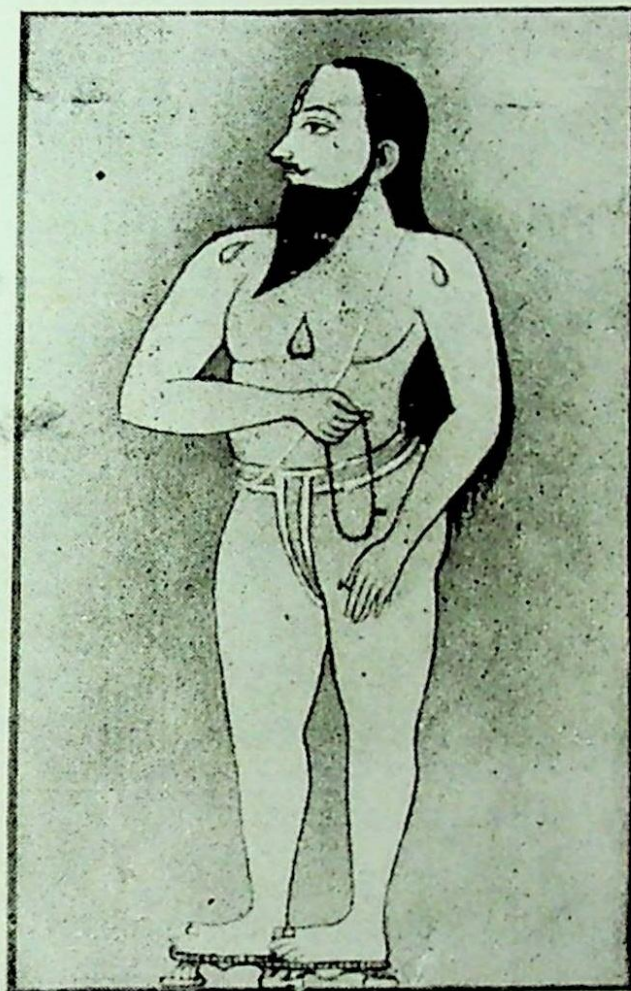
It is hoped that in this year of tri-centenary celebrations, some light would be thrown on these issues.

× A rendering of the writer's Hindi article

□ i. e. in the dispute between the spiritual 'moderates' and the 'extremists' as the adherents of the 'varakari' and the 'Samartha' schools are respectively called :- (publishers.)



Shri Samarth Ramdasa



**Born : Chaitra Sudha 9
Saka 1530 (1608 A.D.)**

**Samadhi : Magh Vaidya 9
Saka 1599. (1677 A. D.)**

**Seminar on 'Samartha Ramadasa' in Gurudev Mandir.
(12 to 14th Dec 1981)**



Sitting :- 1) K. D. Sangoram 2) A. G. Jawadekar
3) Mukund Swami Ramadasa 4) Sou Shalinibai
Jawadekar 5) Sou Mangala Vaishnav
6) Lalit C. Dabholkar

Standing :- 1) G. S. Kulkarni 2) B. R. Modak
3) V. N. Vaidya 5) Sunil Chincholkar
6) S. D. Deshmukh. 7) J. V. Parulekar
8) K. D. Tangod.

Samarthya - Yoga Of Shree Samarth Ramadas.

- By Prof (Dr) **GAJANAN N. SATHE**

“ Jay Jay Raghuvir Samarth ”

was a new incantation, indicating rejoicing at the victory of and prayers for the triumph of Raghuvir Rama, it was a new chant, “ a new mantra ” to be uttered to attain strength, courage and morale. It was bestowed upon the people of Maharashtra in particular and all the Hindus in India in general, by Swami Shree Samarth Ramadas in the seventeenth century. It inspired the people, who were being oppressed and tortured both mentally and physically, frustrated politically, to sacrifice everything, even their lives for the protection of Svarajya and Svadharma. The call “Jay Jay Raghuvir Samarth” revived their aspirations and fortified in them the sense of self-respect and confidence, at a time when they were braving their aggressors. Since the thirteenth century, Maharashtra had been reduced to a lifeless clod-just to be trampled down and crushed to dust by the Yavanas. But this new chant proved to have magical charm upon it. The land immediately stirred and experienced a sort of warmth of life from within, a symptom of life and enthusiasm, and showed a response to the new call, with a determination to face all calamities that befell them. From eleventh century, the Yavanas attacked India again and again and ultimately conquered the north-west part of hers and they became her rulers. Having got well-settled on the throne at Delhi like an octopus, they started spreading their cruel, voracious arms, blood-smeared tentacles, towards the east and the south. They aimed at pushing the then-existing culture, civilisation, religion the political rulers to dust and propagating their own religion by converting the people forcibly. Cruelty to the Hindus, breaking the idols, kidnapping the women folk, oppressing the subjects, levying and collecting illegitimate taxes, plundering the villages and the localities and burning them to ashes, became the order of the day. These horrible realities called for no power of

language or exaggeration to be depicted. This is too well-known a story-a historical fact. How a number of Hindu rulers and their feuds faced the aggressors, how they succumbed to them, and how for high positions in the darbaras, they enslaved themselves to the Yavanas, how they had been neglecting their duties towards their own people-is as clear as broad day light. Thus that was an age of darkness, political chaos and slavery, downfall and frustration.

By the end of the thirteenth century the Yavanas entered Maharashtra and became rulers. The Bahamani kingdom, soon after, was divided into five pieces. The Portuguese tyrannised the west-coast. This brought about the situation which has already been described at the beginning of this article.

Then in 1608, a son was born to Shree Suryajipant Thosar and his wife Shreemati Ranubai. He was named Narayan and was believed to be a fruit of the blessings of the Sun God. This Narayan later on became known as Ramadas, popularly called Samarth or Samarth Ramadas Swami. The chant 'Jay Jay Raghuvir Samarth' from Swami Ramadas brought a ray of hope in the gloom and lit the darkness around.

Ramadas was a staunch devotee of Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu. Ramabhakti was a rich legacy he inherited from his forefathers. They were religious minded and worshippers of Rama for not less than twenty three generations. It is said that Narayan was born as the incarnation of Hanuman, hence it is no wonder that God Rama bestowed equal mercy upon him, as He had done upon Hanuman. It should also be noted that Narayan was born at the same auspicious time, the Muhurta, at which Rama is supposed to be born in the Treta Age. Later on, it is said that Rama himself had appeared before him and blessed him, giving instructions as to what he was expected to do in future. After running away from home, he came to Nasik and practised rigorous penance for twelve years; he worshipped

Rama, he chanted the Rama Mantra 'Shreeram Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama' counting to thirteen crores and lived all these days like an ascetic. He also copied down the Valmiki Ramayan for his own use. Thus he attained spiritual strength, perfect self-realisation, self-control, freedom from passions. Thus he became the master of the divine strength-Samarthya.

After practising rigorous austerities for twelve years at Nasik and Takli, Ramadas went on pilgrimage and visited practically all the shrines in India within a period of twelve years. In this pilgrimage he got an opportunity to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the sad plight of Indian people. He had made a reference to it in his works thus -

" People kidnapped' girls. Justice has sunk down. Domineering was the rule of the day. People quarrelled among themselves for the sake of money. People were being converted forcefully to Muslim religion wealth has been snatched away and mere land existed. A large number of people have been displaced; a large number of them died there. There is no food to eat; no piece of cloth to cover the body.... He also said that the Brahmins were in a sad plight."

One finds in the works of Ramadas a number of references to the situation that prevailed here and there.

While travelling from place to place, all the while Ramadas was thinking, meditating. This meditation had helped him to finalise his goal and the way to attain it. He aimed at attaining salvation for himself through Ramabhakti and awakening people and making them conscious of their duties towards their mother-land, their own religion and thus inspiring them to be free from the bonds of slavery. He also wanted them to be morally good, religious-minded. Thus he wanted individual and the society free from all ties of slavery—moral, political and so on.

It is said that when Ramdas was in the Himalayas, once he experienced total frustration and was about to become a prey to mental weakness and pessimism; he was about

to commit suicide by jumping into a river. But God Rama appeared from behind, caught hold of him and saved him from that 'sin'. Then Ramadas realised his folly and never in life thought of such a timid act again.

It is also believed, that when Ramadas was moving to and fro in the valleys and the mountainous region of southern Maharashtra, Rama had ordered Hanuman to work as his guard.

I have deliberately narrated this, as I want to proceed to shedding light on his ideas about strength i. e. Samarthya.

When one talks of Samarthya, at the beginning he thinks of physical strength only. But that is only one of the aspects of real Samarthya, only a very very minor one. Samarthya, one thinks, lies in wealth, in power-power bestowed upon a king, upon a judge. It also lies in weapons and skill to make use of them. Samarthya in the form of knowledge in the form of intellect, in the form of wisdom, shrewdness etc., should not be neglected.

Courage, spirit of adventure, balance of mind, high ambition and high ideals, an ardent desire to bring them into practical life, endeavour and perseverance, fearlessness, all these mental qualities constitute Samarthya. Self-respect and self confidence and sense of morality also should be taken into consideration.

In addition to these physical and mental qualities, saints like Ramadas had full faith in the spiritual power, which can be acquired through devotion to God i. e. Bhakti and by practising austerities, by mastering a Mantra. Bhakti is a means to an end, as it pleases God and He then protects the interests of his devotee.

Devotees like Ramadas, at the individual level think of salvation as a goal of a mortal being. One may attain salvation through Bhakti. Of course, this is an individual aspect of Samarthya.

I have used the term 'Samarthya-Yoga' in the title. The above-mentioned points will give a general idea of implications of Samarthya. The term 'Samarthya-Yoga' indicates the way in which Samarthya can be accumulated and how one can use the same in implementing his ideas and reach his goal. Let us just see how Ramadas practised this kind of Samarthya-Yoga first from an individual point of view.

Ramadas from the childhood was strong and stout. He was a very good swimmer, he knew how to ride a horse. In short, we may say that he had the best type of physical samarthya. In one way, it may be called hereditary and on the other, fruits of the efforts he had taken to develop physical strength through exercise,

Secondly, Ramadas had shown his mental strength. We know how he had taken the decision of not marrying and leading a life of Brahmachari, in order that he might get rid of family ties.

Practising rigorous penance helped him to develop a sense of self control. He achieved spiritual samarthya through the austerities and his devotion to Rama, by reciting the Rama mantra crores of times.

Divine blessings had led him successfully to become a devotee of Rama of perfect order. Meditation made him mentally strong, pilgrimage made him strong in the field of practical experience.

And Rama-kripa had made him Samarthya incarnate.

One becomes almost like a God he worships with devotion. Ramadas, as it is already told, had inherited Ramabhakti. But he also had made an improvement upon its motive. His Ramabhakta forefathers were, one and all Grihasthas, i. e. ideal Grihasthas in complete sense of the term. But young Narayan deviated from their path and became an ascetic. Here also, he is not like an ordinary ascetic or Ramabhakta, who sought individual salvation only. Ramadas did not live for himself alone. While seeking salvation for himself, he did not forget that he was a component

part of the society. He had the sense of his social responsibilities. He had achieved the Samarthya of thinking or comprehending the world and making an attempt for bringing perfect good to the society.

Hence he concentrated on the devotion of Rama. His Rama was an ideal in every aspect of life. He was an ideal son, ideal brother, ideal husband. Rama was an ideal friend and also an ideal foe. He was an ideal king. He was ideal in every walk of life, in every sense of the term 'ideal'.

Ramadas had chosen Dhanurdhari Rama, i., e. Rama having a bow in his hand, as his God for devotion and worship. He had not laid stress on Seeta-Rama or Sia-Ram as many a devotee like Tulsidas did. Why Rama attracted him so much, besides being ideal in every respect? Ramadas says -

'Rama is a God of Gods. He himself had rescued gods (from the jail in which they were put by Ravana). Rama has thus become a shelter to Gods. Rama had destroyed the wicked, supported and protected and given shelter to his devotees'.

Hence Ramadas loved Rama-nama and the story of Rama. He believed that the story of Rama is superior to that of other gods, like Indra, Brahma etc. and it should be carried beyond the limits of this universe

It is clear here that Ramadas laid stress on Rama's rescuing gods from the bondage and destroying the wicked.

He called Rama-' The Samarth-' a person having all sorts of strength- Samarthya incarnate.

In those days, the Varkari cult was very popular. The Varkaris were the devotees of Vitthal, a form of Vishnu-Krishna in fact. But Vitthal was neither that Shankha-Chakra-Gada-Padmadhari Vishnu, nor Sudarshana Chakradhari Krishna; he was Vithai-a mother to the distressed children in the form of devotees. Rama of Ramadas was not only a delicate-hearted mother to the devotees; he was a king, an expert judge and a perfect disciplinarian.

It need not be stressed here again, that this type of Rama, the Samarth was worshipped by Ramadas. Rama was pleased with his devotion. Long back Rama had guided Ramadas in what he should do. Rama had told him :-

“You have to protect the world;
See that your body is mine one.
I have protected it with a view
that you should protect and re-establish
the Dharma. ”

Thus Ramadas obtained physical, moral, spiritual Samarthya to the maximum extent and later on he himself was believed to be ‘Samarth’ by the people.

He has advised himself and thereby, others also to be free from the six foes in the form of passions. He has advised himself and the people in general in “Manobodhache Sloka”. He advises to give up everything that is abominable, wickedness, sinfulness, anger, boastfulness, jealousy etc., and to go on the path of righteousness, truthfulness, courage, politeness etc.

Thereby one’s mind becomes purified. In the pure mind, seed of morality and devotion can be sown. One should realize the momentariness and futility of worldly wealth.

Devotion , Bhakti-offered by such a pure and conscious mind is a great power. Ramadas practised it. Out of the nine forms of Bhakti, though each has its own significance in attaining ‘Ramakripa’, ‘Dasya’ is the supreme. Ramadas practised the ‘Dasya-bhakti’. He was incarnation of that, even to this extent that he gave up his own name Narayan and called himself Ramadas a ‘das’ must approach God with extreme humbleness, He is just a humble, poor fellow, living only on the mercy of God. He expresses his wretchedness and vices. He does Atmanivedan and prays God to have mercy on him. This is well described in ‘Ramadas’s, ‘Karunashtakas’.

Such a Bhakti itself is great Samarthya and it bestows Samarthya on the devotees. This is spiritual Samarthya and Ramadas possessed it.

Ramadas, though believed to be an incarnation of Hanuman, was a great worshiper of Hanuman. Hanuman is a symbol of Samarthya and devotion. Ramadas took him as ideal and how he propagated Hanuman - Bhakti need not be narrated here.

Thus Ramadas equipped himself with all the Samarthya with which he could fight the foes on the spiritual and moral path of religion, which would lead him to individual salvation.

But Ramadas was not self-centred. He was conscious of the society in which he lived. Hence he preached the gospel of Samarthya to the people and guided them to gain strength and freedom.

In this respect he believed that only a single individual would not be able to achieve much. Hence the leader must gather together thousands of people. This is the principle of 'Loka-sangraha' - of bringing together people. Ramadas has, in his Dasabodha and other works, stressed the importance of Loka-Sangraha and given tips in connection with this policy and devices to unite the people. Ramadas Says:-

“ Choose virtues and good tendencies.

Teach them to the people and strengthen their groups

Know the capacity of each and assign them some work.”

He had also shown how the leader should be equipped with various qualities.

Secondly, in the Social aspect of his goal, he believes in being active, in starting and carrying on movements. He says 'There is Samarthya in movements and it will be acquired by whoever starts movements. He then warns that even then God is not to be forgotten, it must be seen that He is at the base and is omnipresent:

(57)

**“ Samarthya Ahe Chalawaliche,
Jo Jo Kareel tayanche
Parantu tethe Bhagavantache
Adhishtana Pahije.”**

**An individual, joining this group attains Samarthya
the real sense of the word. Then Ramadas Says :-**

**Who is there in the world that will stare at the devotee
of Rama with malice, as Rama does not neglect his Dasas ?**

**Samarthachiya Sevaka Vakra pahe
Asa sarva bhoo-mandali kon ahe ?
Jayachi leela varniti loka teenhee
Nupekshee kada Ramadasabhimani.**

**Thirdly this movement, activity, ‘ Chalwal ’ is to be
carried through and endeavour must be duly made. Ramadas
says - “ Know that Endeavour is God itself.”**

(Yetna to Deo Janava). and he says -

**“ Kindle the fire; once you kindle it, it burns brilliantly;
likewise is the fire of Vivek, the conscientiousness.**

**A work is accomplished when you do it, hence start
it first. Bear this in mind, that endeavour is God; justice
is God.**

**Samarthya is power only when it is utilised. If it is
just accumulated and kept idle, it is no power at all.
Ramadas knew this very well; hence he advises to give up
idleness, sloth and start endeavouring with a will to do
something.**

**He preached that such an attempt must be made with
consciousness-**

" Akhand Savadhan Re I
Prayog yetna man Re.

Ramadas then does not attach much importance to fate or luck. According to him, if there is endeavour, what is that that remains lacking in luck.

" Bhagyasi kaya unen Re,
Yetnavarchoni rahilen. "

Ramadas has often spoken of 'Rajakaran'; but that word does not mean politics alone. It embraces, according to him, all the activities that are worth being done for the real progress of the people. This Rajakaran is a matter of struggle. It cannot be accomplished by the weak, hence the weak should be taught various kinds of devices.

"Dhakadhakicha mamala
Kaisa ghade ashaktala"

Thus the Samarthya yoga of Shree Ramadas as a man in the society is based on physical, mental, moral and spiritual strength; it has social aspect also. As an individual, Ramadas aimed at acquiring Ramakripa and through it salvation of the self

But as a man in the society, he aimed at salvation of the people also from yavan rule, from whatever is unfair, unjust, irreligious, immoral. His ideal God Rama rescued the Gods and destroyed the demons, then established Ramarajya, the ideal rule. Ramadas also dreamt of Ramarajya which he wanted to see on the surface of this earth. The term "Anandavan" is equivalent to Ramarajya for him. The tyrannous Yavanas were the Rakshasas for him. So he preached that the Marathas should be united. Their unity would be a real strength, Shakti, Samarthya. He says this Shakti Samarthya must be utilised with shrewdness; where the Shakti-and 'Yukti' are accompanying each other there "The wealthy" is found well-settled. This 'Yukti' (cleverness, worldly wisdom, shrewdness) is itself a great

mental Samarthya. Ramadas has told how the ruler could go on ruling successfully with the coordination of Shakti and Yukti.

This is the Social aspect of the Samarthya Yoga of Shree Samarth Ramadas.

India had dark age from the tenth century onwards. In this age, nearly in all the provinces various kinds of the Bhakti cult arose and were propagated by various saints and poets. Tulsidas, Chandidas, Chaitanya Prabhu, Narsi Mehta and a number of others tried their best to lead the people in general on the path of bhakti, morality and religious-mindedness. But all of them had aimed at the attainment of bliss in the other world and preparing the ground in this worldly existence to achieve that aim. But there is one saint alone, who preached to bring about co-ordination in both, who believed in the liberation of the society from every kind of slavery-political, social or religious and in securing blissful life in this world only. He believed firmly in the Samarthya Yoga, his doctrine, ideology of accumulation of Samarthya and the way to utilise the same, to realise a blissful life here in this world and also in the other world.

THIS SAINT WAS SHREE SAMARTH RAMADAS.



(60)

REVIEWS

(1) **The Paradox of Instruction.** By Bubba Free John. The Dawn Horse Press, San Francisco, California (U.S.A.); 2nd edn., 1977, pp. 326; Price : 5.95.

To readers in India these outpourings of insight into the core of everlasting bliss, imbedded in the heart of human beings, come as a refreshing breeze from the West, often confirming the insights of ancient sages of this land as well as present day saints like Sri Ramana Maharshi.

It is well known that the Illumination of the Buddha and the Upanishadic Realization of Brahman as well as Visvarupa of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita are admittedly experiences beyond words. Yet, so many words have been written about these and so many pathways of yoga propagated in words that a real aspirant after Perfection, here and now, is left more confused than ever by the plethora of words.

Bubba Free John's discourses are addressed to Everyman. They show how the very idea of a spiritual seeking involves a dichotomy of body and spirit, soul and God, subject and object, knowledge and ignorance and so forth. It is his experience that Absolute "Truth - Existence - Bliss" is neither intellectual knowledge nor a new condition to be acquired, but a discovery or recognition of what one always is by rising above the plane of dilemmas, dichotomies and all incidental considerations of life, material as well as spiritual. The existential or experiential truth itself, according to him is a paradox. It is not realization of some new knowledge but an awakening into Primordial Ignorance which is one's true estate. He makes it a natural condition of the human heart unconditioned by either sensual cravings or intellectual exercises.

This is indeed a new way of making one realise today in a language one can understand, that what is really wanted is a total vision, transcending all dualities, denying nothing and affirming nothing. It is possible to be felt at any given

moment in the life of a man, by the grace of the Teacher, provided one has successfully awakened out of the dream of so-called life, turning all his activity into Love and Love into Sacrifice. The Way of Divine ignorance or Radical Understanding puts a new emphasis on the re-orientation of the whole man and is a non-strategic dissolution of the ego-soul in the Heart, resulting in the Radiance of the Highest. It makes us understand the real meaning of sahaja-samadhi, bhavasamadhi and Amratanubhava better. A book to be read over and over again by every sadhaka.

Dr. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY

(2) Naa Kanda Hurakadli Ajja By : Sri S.B. Hocgar, Principal Civil Judge, Dharwad. Published by Sanjeevana Prakashana Ramadurg. Price : Rs. 3.

The book under review gives a vivid account of the noble and pious personality of revered Sri Annadaneshwar born at Ibrahimpur of Navalgund Taluka in Dharwad District and popularly known as Hurakadli Ajja because of a miracle for which the author holds him responsible. Besides tracing the family history of this noble personality, the author narrates his unique achievements and mode of worship which are sure to attract all. The author who was attracted towards this noble soul during moments of distress in his personal life has written the book with proper devotion and has paid his respects to Sri Hurakadli Ajja. The book is written in an appealing language. It is sure to interest the readers. The readers should be thankful to the author for introducing the noble personality to the readers though the author has confessed that he has written the book for his mental and spiritual satisfaction. I am not surprised if the readers welcome the book heartily.

Prof. K. D. TANGOD

(3) Kranti Kahale : Yeli ! Yeddeli ! ! By : R. Venkatesh, Kannada Writer, Talkad. Published by Vishwa Samaja Publications, Talkad. Price : Rs 3.

The booklet under review gives a call to writers for revolution. The author himself an enthusiastic and alert

writer seems to be much disturbed by the insult and unsympathetic treatment he received from great personalities in the fields of literature and journalism. It is so because these personalities care more for their personal status and prestige. We can understand the feelings of the author. Even recognising the important role of writers in society at all times we should not forget that the world is full of good as well as bad people. We have to get on well with good people and develop courage to put up with bad ones. The author is justified in asking the writers to raise their voice against the injustice caused to them. Instead of honestly describing the pitiable position of writers in today's society the author gives merely an account of personal grievances that does not at all agree with the purpose of the book as stated by the author in his appeal at the start.

(Prof.) K. D. TANGOD

(4) Sri Gurudeva Ranade (Marathi),

— By N. S. KUNTE

Publishers : Santkrupa Prakashan; Pune-30

The book under review is an attempt to sketch the life of Prof. R. D. Ranade, coupled with a brief information about the spiritual practices prescribed in the Nimbargi sect to which Prof. Ranade belonged.

Without questioning the integrity and sincerity of the writer, the reviewer feels that the book does not seem to be carefully written. The language could have been clearer and unambiguous. On page 3 of the book, the writer says : “ श्रीगुरुदेवांच्या मातोश्रींचे नाव पार्वतीबाई. भागूअक्का ही त्यांची कन्या ” In this clumsy form, the sentence means that the name of Gurudeva's mother was Parvatibai, and Bhagu-akka was Gurudeva's daughter (?), when Bhagu-akka is Parvatibai's daughter, and Gurudeva's sister. Similarly, on page 16, the writer says : “ १९१४ ते १९२० पर्यंत ते फर्ग्युसन कॉलेजात प्राध्यापक म्हणून लागले ”. This sentence in its present form is likely to be interpreted to mean that sometime during the period 1914 to 1920, Gurudeva was appointed a professor in the Fergusson

College. In stead, the writer should have written : “१९१४ साली ते फर्ग्युसन कॉलेजात प्राध्यापक म्हणून लागले आणि १९२० पर्यंत ते या पदावर होते”. Again on page 24, the writer writes : “हे पत्र बऱ्याच दृष्टीने महत्वाचे आहे”. It would mean that the letter is important from a good point of view indeed (?). It ought to have been : “हे पत्र बऱ्याच दृष्टींनी महत्वाचे आहे”, which would express what the writer intends to express, i. e., that the letter is important from many points of view. The writer refers to Mrs. Ranade as ‘गुरुमाउली’ (pp. 55-56) to express his (natural) regard for the consort of Gurudeva, but the word ‘गुरुमाउली’ would mean either ‘the Mother in the form of the Guru’ or the ‘mother of the Guru’. This usage is therefore, not apt.

At some places the writer has given wrong or misleading information. For example, on page 41, the writer refers to Shri Babasaheb Sangoram as a brother-disciple of Gurudeva Ranade which is not the case. So also on pages 46-47, the writer confounds the reader by misleading him to think that Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande was a disciple of Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj, which again is not the case. Again on page 70 Prof. Damle has been wrongly referred to as a grandson of Gurudeva. That Gurudeva worked as a runner in 1914 (p. 28) is disputable, and it is not supported in other published lives of Prof. Ranade.

At some places there are evident inconsistencies. For example, on page 25, the writer says that the ‘अध्यात्म-विद्यापीठ’ was started at Nimbai and immediately after, he says also that it was started in Poona.

A good feature of the book is the short but sweet foreword by Dr. R. C. Dhere.

(Prof.) S. G. DESHPANDE



**Visit of Charity Commissioner, Belgaum
to Gurudev Mandir (31-10-1981)**



1) D. B. Parulekar 2) G. S. Kulkarni 3) N. S. Metrani
(4) (5) (6) Shri P. L. Kumarswami, Mrs. Kumarswami,
and their grand-daughter. 7) J. V. Parulekar

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Vaikunthachaturdasi Nama-Saptah (1981)
in Gurudev Mandir



Some Sadhakas attending the Saptah.

Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion Belgaum.

(REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31. 12. 1981)

The Vaikunthachaturdasi Nama-Sapath (6th to 10th Nov.) was attended by about 75 Sadhakas. They spent their whole time in meditation. P.P. Sharakka Naik came to Belgaum, particularly to attend this Saptah and everybody was happy for her presence.

The Seminar on 'Samartha Ramadas' began on 12th December. The Secretary-Shri Parulekar welcomed the participants and suggested in his speech that an organization should be built up to spread the activist philosophy of Shri Samartha Ramadas and thereby to curb the evil tendencies in the national life and to bring back to every man the morality and spiritual life preached by Shri Samartha Ramdas. Shri K. D. Sangoram, Chairman of the Trust, then garlanded Dr. A. G. Jawadekar of Baroda who presided over the deliberations of the Seminar and the participants then read their papers as follows :-

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Shri Mukund Swami Ramdasi - Tembu. | श्री समर्थ जीवनपट |
| 2) Dr. (Sou.) Lalit Charu-datta Dabholkar. M. A. Ph. D. Satara | समर्थ रामदास; त्यांचे तत्वज्ञान व परमार्थ. |
| 3) Dr. S. D. Deshmukh. Murgud. (Kolhapur Dist) | श्री समर्थाचा काळ: त्यांचे सामाजिक व राजकीय कार्य |
| 4) Shri Sunil Chincholkar, Sajjangad. | महाराष्ट्राच्या रंगभूमीवरील शिवसमर्थ योग |
| 5) Dr. Vasantrao N. Vaidya Chafal. | दासबोध आणि त्यातील समर्थांची मुख्य शिकवण |
| 6) Prof: B. R. Modak, M.A.Ph. D. Dharwar. | रामदासांचे समर्थ मानस शास्त्र |
| 7) Prof: S. G. Deshpande, M. A. Belgaum. | दासबोध आणि त्यातील नेमकी रामदासांची शिकवण |
| 8) Dr. (Sou.) Mangala Vaishnav. M. A. Ph. D. Aurangabad. | श्री समर्थ रामदास: आदर्श पुरुष |

- 9) Padmashri Baburao Gokhale, Karad. समर्थाचा समाजवाद
- 10) Sou. Shalinibai A. Jawadekar. G. A. Baroda. श्री समर्थ रामदास : आदर्श पुरुष
- 11) Dr. Ranganath Godbole, M. A. Ph. D. Moksha-dham: Machanur. श्री समर्थ रामदासस्वामींची तत्वसृष्टी

Prof : P.M. Upadhye, M.A.Ph.D. Bombay had sent his paper on मनाचे इलाकः त्याचीच भक्तिरस व अध्यात्म but he could not attend the seminar and read his paper.

The Seminar concluded on 14.12 1981 in the evening with a fine and enlightening speech of the President, Dr. Jawadekar.

The papers and the proceedings will soon be printed and made available to the public.

The following persons have been enrolled as :-

Life members.

Shri J. D. Kale. (Chief Engineer Retd.) Pune	Rs. 300
Shri D. R. Bellubbi. (Chief Engineer Retd.) Bgm.	„ 300/-
Prof : N. S. Kunte. Sholapur.	„ 300/-

Life-subscribers.

Shri. V V. Bhide (Bombay-26)	Rs. 100/-
„ D. R. Deo. (Yantrapur-Harihar)	„ 101/-
„ Theosophical Society, Camp-Belgaum	„ 100/-

Donations were received as follows :

Dr. B. S. Ganpule. (Gurudeo Ranade colony)	„ 101/-
Shri. P. I. Ambewadikar, Angol	„ 250/-
Dr. S. K. Pachhapurkar, M.E.B.S. Sangli (Donor)	„ 500/-
Navaratra Utsav Mandal, Hindwadi	„ 101/-
Shri. S. S. Nagparkar, Pune. (Donor)	„ 500/-
„ V. Y. Gaitonde, Pune. (Donor)	„ 500/-
„ M. B. Gokhale, (Ghatkopar)	„ 100/-
Smt. Sarojini Gopalkrishna Saraf	
Tilakwadi (Donor)	„ 501/-

The Ramana Maharshi Essay Competition

The Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning, Bangalore, is sponsoring an Essay Competition and is offering Rs 1,000 as a first prize, Rs. 500 as a second prize, and up to five consolation prizes of Rs. 200 each.

The rules of the competition are as follows :

1. The submitted essay should consist of a discussion on, or an analysis of, any aspect of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. We are also prepared to accept entries consisting of a comparative study of the teachings of Sri Ramana and the teaching of any other major spiritual figure or religious tradition. In either case, the judges will be looking for essays which show a deep understanding of Sri Ramana's basic message, or which give new insights into the fundamental tenets of his teachings.

2. All essays must be typed in English and must reach the judges by 28 february 1982

3) Essays must be between 3,000 and 3,500 words in length, and they should be submitted to following address :

**The Ramana Maharshi Essay Competition,
The Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning,
40/41, First Floor, Second Cross Road,
Lower Palace Orchards,
Bangalore - 560 003.**

4. The sources of all quotations used must be given in full either in the text itself or as footnotes. In all cases, the title of the work, the edition and the page number must be given.

5. The results of the competition will be published in the April 1982 issue of **The Mountain Path**, the journal of Sri Ramana Maharshi's Ashram at Tiruvannamalai and at least two of the prize-winning essays will be printed in the same issue. The editors of **The Mountain Path** have undertaken to publish all the submitted essays which they deem to be worthy of publication whether they win prizes or not.

Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum.

Some important publications :

- 1) Silver Jubilee Souvenir, Vol. I
(pillars of Sri Gurudev's Sampradaya
and Heart Homages to Shri Gurudeo)
pp. XVI + 394 Ed : K. D. Sangoram
M. S. Deshpande Rs. 32/-
- 2) Silver Jubilee Souvenir, Vol. II
(Gurudeva's Philosophy of God
Realisation).
pp. XIII + 155 Ed : K. D. Sangoram
M. S. Deshpande Rs. 15/-
- 3) Gurudeo Ranade.
Biography and Mysticism.
pp. VII + 377 S. N. Deshpande. Rs. 24/-
- 4) Critical and Constructive Aspects
of Dr. R. D. Ranade's Philosophy.
Prof. B. R. Kulkarni. Rs. 12/-
- 5) God Realisation; Sadhana and Effects
(Seminar Proceedings) Rs. 7/-
- 6) Summum Bonum of Life
(Seminar Proceedings) Rs. 10/-

For commission etc. and full catalogue :-
Please contact :

- (1) Gurudev Mandir : Hindwadi,
Belgaum - 590011.
- (2) C. S. Gupta. Gurudeo Ranade Memorial
Institute of Philosophy and Mysticism.
Next to Canara Bank : Gandhi Bazar
Bangalore - 560004.